



Benny Benson's Hidden Unangaê Heritage



Alaska State Archives detail ASL-MS14-1-1-01; colorized by Fvodor Soloviev

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*Among the earlier Aleuts it is possible to suspect a certain
veneration of...the celestial bodies...
the heavenly luminaries...
the moon...
the stars...*

Notes on the Islands of the Unalashka, Ivan Veniaminov, [1834; 1984], Fairbanks: University of Alaska & Kingston, Ontario: Limestone Press

BENNY BENSON'S HIDDEN UNANGAĀ HERITAGE

by

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Benny Benson

Benny Benson is one of the most respected and revered people in Alaska history. As the creator of Alaska's flag, he overcame tremendous personal tragedy and transformed hardship into triumph.

Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska's Flag, India M. Spartz, 2001, Alaska State Museums, p. 10

Figure 1 Benny Benson & Teacher, On Steps of Jesse Lee Home, Seward, 1927, Alaska State Museums, Bea Shepard Collection

FEEDBACK



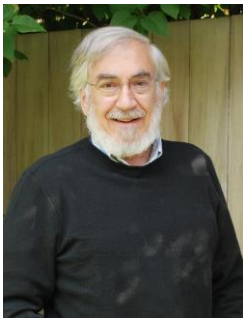
More cultural research is now being done by Tribes and their people. This document by Dr. Michael Livingston is an example of this type of research and how it brings to light things previously unknown. We look forward to future such research and publications to strengthen the Unangaĥ voice.

President/CEO Dimitri Philemonof
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association



Alaskans, here's something interesting for your news feed: "An inquiry into the family history of Benny Benson, the winner of the 1927 Alaska flag contest and creator of the Alaska flag, has yielded a correction to Alaska history. Contrary to the long-standing belief that Mr. Benson was 13 years old when he won the flag contest, he was in fact 14 years old." Thank you to Dr. Mike Livingston, Cultural Heritage Specialist APIA for researching this and correcting the record!

Governor Mike Dunleavy
State of Alaska



As told by a diverse team of scholars, the story of Benny Benson's heritage shows how careful research can unearth a rich historical record and fine-tune our understanding of the past. At the same time, this deep dive into one man's family history also provides glimpses into some of the larger aspects of Native life in Alaska in the first half of the twentieth century. A fine example of collaborative, painstaking investigation, *Benny Benson's Hidden Unangaĥ Heritage* will be of interest to many readers.

Douglas W. Veltre, Ph.D.
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology
University of Alaska Anchorage



As a Qawalangaĥ, an Unangaĥ, and an Alaskan, I was delighted to read this paper about birth records and unraveling the genealogical puzzles of Benny Benson, the beloved designer of Alaska's flag. The paper is a good example of the difficulty and value of such erudition and the exacting research often required in the process of decolonization.

Barbara Švarný Carlson
Qawalangaĥ



This paper is a carefully crafted guide through genealogical and historical records that confirms Benny Benson's "new" birth year and clearly establishes his Unangaĥ roots.

Ray Hudson
Author
"Moments Rightly Placed: An Aleutian Memoir"

Among the earlier Aleuts it is possible to suspect a certain veneration of...the celestial bodies... the sun... the moon... the stars....⁶



One of the biggest thing that ever happened I think was when they flew the Alaska flag to the moon... I think that was quite a deal... I'm... the only ... state flag designer alive.⁷

⁶ Note on the Islands of the Unalashka District, Ivan Veniaminov, [1834] 1984, p. 217, University of Alaska Fairbanks

⁷ Benny Benson, Eight Stars of Gold, 1971, <https://youtu.be/QE2ZD3bg7t8>, 13:22 – 14:30

ABSTRACT

Friday, July 9, 2027, will be the 100-year anniversary of the raising of the Alaska flag designed by seventh-grade student Benny Benson. Top 8% of US state flag designs. Only US state flag designed by a Native American. Youngest designer. Indentured #217. Orphan. Poorest. "Inmate." Only US state flag designer alive when the flags were flown to the Moon. As we prepare for the 100-year anniversary, what do know about Benny - as opposed to assume?

We assumed that Benny was age 13 when he won the Alaska flag contest in 1927; history books said so. We assumed that his date of birth was October 12, 1913, and that his mother's maiden name was Tatiana Schebolein. His official State of Alaska birth certificate said so. Yet, while researching Benny's family tree, we uncovered documents which indicated otherwise. We contacted a relative who said Benny's birth certificate is incorrect. We contacted the State of Alaska's Health Analytics and Vital Records Section (HAVRS) who contacted the Alaska State Museums. A panel of Alaska history experts reviewed our documents and agreed that Benny's birthdate should be corrected. HAVRS said we needed a court order. We petitioned the Alaska Superior Court, and on February 28, 2022, Alaska Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman issued a court order (containing Unangam tunuu – Aleut language) to correct Benny Benson's birth records. Benny was actually born on September 12, 1912 – over 13 months earlier than previously reported. Benny's mother's maiden name was not Tatiana Schebolein; it was Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina.

We also assumed that Benny was Alutiiq. Many sources said so, and good sources too: Museums, libraries, Alaska Native organizations, and Alaska historical societies. In 1950, when Benny was age 38, he moved to Kodiak. Sadly, in 1972, at age 59, Benny passed away and is buried in Kodiak. Kodiak is Alutiiq territory, and this may explain why Benny is often identified as Alutiiq. Yet Alaska Native ancestry is not defined solely upon where we move to later in life or the geographical location where we are born or are buried. Alaska Native ancestry is defined by where our ancestors are born and lived. When one of our genealogy colleagues casually mentioned finding records that indicated Benny's mother Tatiana was born in Unangaĥ territory, this launched a lengthy-, in-depth genealogical investigation of his family tree. With help from many others, we found birth and marriage records which demonstrate that Benny's mother Tatiana and his grandparents were born in Unalaska – the heart of Unangaĥ territory. Thus, Benny was a member of the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska – the Qawaĥ or Sea Lion Tribe. His great grandparents were from Amlia Village; Benny was a descendant of the Native Village of Atka. Despite others claiming without evidence that Benny Benson was Alutiiq, the documents found during this research show that Benny was Unangaĥ.

This research is significant on several fronts. First, it spotlights Benny Benson who – despite all odds – won a contest by reaching for the stars. Over 95 years after he won the Alaska flag contest, Benny is still in the news in a heartwarming story during the depth of a gloomy global pandemic and conflict in Ukraine. Like most family tree stories, there are sad (even heart-wrenching) times, but overall, Benny's story is uplifting. This paper illuminates the plight of Alaska orphans who sometimes do not know their date of birth, the names of their ancestors, or their cultural heritage. Orphans need good families and thorough family tree research. This paper also underscores the importance of questioning written history and the need for history detectives keen on forensically investigating Alaska family trees with patient persistence while seeking the truth – whatever the truth may be. The birth record correction is significant because it changes Alaska history and represents a larger effort towards truth, reconciliation, equity, and racial justice for North American indigenous peoples who were often given the short shrift in the 20th Century. The birth record correction is a victory for archivists, Russian Orthodox family record keepers, and genealogists who love a complex mystery that twists and turns over time. This paper spotlights the need for careful research before centenary celebrations. Finally, this paper spotlights the linguistic and artistic talents of the Unangaĥ people from whom so much has been taken during the past 300 years and who have given so much including the name Alaska itself and now we know the strong design of the unique Alaska flag.

Keywords Benny Benson, Unangaĥ, Unangan, Unangas, intellectual property, loss prevention, Aleut, Alaska flag, cultural misappropriation, birth records correction, Anfesia Shapsnikoff, John Ben Benson, Jr.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to...

...Alaska seventh grade students...

...who know...

...there is no chance...

...of winning a contest...

...and enter ...

...anyway.

This article is also dedicated with affection to...

- Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina (1879 – 1917)
- John Ben Benson, Sr. (1858 – 1937)
- John Ben Benson, Jr. (1912 – 1972)
- Anna Sophie Greichen Jenks Bensen (1914 – 1994)
- Vickie Wynnelle Era Pankretz (1947 – 2023)

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The views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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Maybe Plato was right. Challenging existing truth probably won't win you many friends. But it just may set the history straight for future generations (Gray 2019, 1:27).

JULY 9, 1927: JESSE LEE HOME SEWARD, ALASKA

July 9, 1927 rose on a sunny Saturday in Seward, Alaska. Benny got dressed that morning in the best clothes he could find and combed his hair straight back. He wore a button up shirt underneath of a knitted sweater. He wore knicker-stye pants, tall socks, and laced leather shoes. He stood on the concrete stairs on the south side of the Jesse Lee Home to pose for a photograph. His hair was combed straight back, the way he liked it. His black hair sticking out the back earned him the nickname “Porcupine.”

He held his arms down to his sides, and his chest in a proud fashion with his shoulders slightly back. To his right, standing on the concrete stairs was his seventh-grade teacher, beaming proudly towards Benny’s face. Benny faced the photographer and smiled proudly. Benny had just won the Alaska flag contest, and his flag was being raised on the flagpole. Benny would be later identified as “one of the most respected and revered people in Alaska history.”⁸ Please see Figure 1 courtesy of the Alaska State Museums and the Bea Shepard Collection.

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

We begin with preliminary matters, updates in this 2023 version, an introduction of the authors and Unangâ elder Anfesia Shapsnikoff who knew Benny Benson, traditional Alaska Native values indicating the importance of family tree research, our methods of research, limitations, delimitations, a brief review of Benny’s accomplishments, and a synopsis of geographical differences between Unangâ and Alutiiq/Sugpiat territory. Following preliminary matters, we present our Findings, followed by Things Taken from the Unangâ People, Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion.

UPDATES IN JULY 2023 VERSION

In this updated 2023 version, there is a new cover with a colorized photograph of Benny when he won the contest in 1927. There is a new interview from Unalaska resident Coe Whittern who stated that Benny Benson traveled to Unalaska to visit him only a year before Benny passed away and stated that he designed the Alaska flag in Unalaska. A new photograph of what may be the church where Benny was born has been located. News articles published after the first version of this report are included. Measurements recorded of the stairs on the west side of the Jesse Lee Home in Seward where Benny stood just after winning the flag contest are included. Researchers may be able to study the photographs and the measurements and derive an accurate height of Benny at the time he won the flag contest. After Benny’s height is calculated, his weight may be estimated. To assist future researchers, the entire affidavit for the court order correction is included. An additional dedication of this booklet has been added. Benny's mother Tatiana Sorokin and her husband Peter Sorokin were located in the 1900 US Federal Census in Unalaska. Finally, Benny’s

⁸ Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska’s Flag, India M. Spartz, 2001, Alaska State Museums, p. 10

grave was recently added to Google Maps, possibly making it easier for those wanting to do so to pay respect to Alaska's amazing flag designer.

INTRODUCTION OF AUTHORS

Michael *iqyaĥ* Livingston is a cultural heritage specialist with Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association and was raised in Unangaĥ territory (Cold Bay), attended high school in Alutiiq/Sugpiat territory, and attended college in Athabaskan territory. Mike has worked in Chignik, Unalaska, and Kodiak. Mike serves as principal investigator with the National Science Foundation, affiliate assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Alaska Anchorage, affiliate faculty at Alaska Pacific University, and captain with the Alaska State Defense Force. Mike holds a master's degree in anthropology and a doctoral degree in education. He learned Attu basket weaving and Unangaĥ cultural values from Anfesia Shapsnikoff and model *iqyaĥ* (sea kayak) construction from Sergie Sovoroff. His Unangaĥ name *iqyaĥ* means "single hatch sea kayak."

Martha "Marti" Murray was raised in Unalaska in the US Marshal's home where she watched federal court proceedings, growing up with a deep love of Unangaĥ/Aleut people, art, culture, and history. Marti worked for the City of Unalaska for many years before moving to Kodiak where she worked for the State of Alaska and continues her genealogical research. Marti's early childhood experiences sparked an interest in deep family tree research and the formation of Aleut DataBank – one of the most comprehensive collections of Unangaĥ/Aleut genealogy histories in Alaska, formed during decades of extensive research, now containing over 600,000 names. Marti is an honorary member of the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska. Marti regularly gives presentations and provides instruction on Alaska family tree research.

Stenner Evans was born in Bristol, United Kingdom, where he grew up with a passion for family tree research and learning new languages, particularly Russian and German. In his family tree research, he discovered that he has roots from the Aleutian Islands off the southwest coast of Alaska. Stenner worked as a chef in Wiltshire village and Guernsey before moving to Lancashire where he works as a caterer, piano teacher, and a genealogist - helping people every day learn about their family trees. Stenner finds family tree research fascinating. He would like to visit Alaska one day to meet his relatives from the Aleutians.

Fyodor Soloviev was born in Moscow, Russia and graduated from Moscow State University as a journalist. He was a radio correspondent and formed the first private classified magazine *Clip in the USSR*, and in 1990 immigrated to USA, opening in Anchorage the Russian-English translations agency RUSA. Fyodor also supplied the Russian Far East with American-made consumer goods, owned an art gallery *2000 Gifts & Art* in the Dimond Center Mall, invented a genealogical Six Generations card game, and helped Russian communities in Alaska as a bilingual notary public. His passion is family history research of his Russian and German ancestors, and lobbying construction of a US-Russia-China railroad through Bering Strait tunnel at his business InterBering, LLC, to help Alaska become the crossroad of international cargo and passenger market, solving the budget deficit.

Carol Larsen Smith was born and raised in Unga Village on Unga Island in the Shumagin Islands, Alaska. Her historical interest in the Shumagin Islands, the Alaska Peninsula, and its westward islands began when she was the Director of Shareholder Affairs at The Aleut Corporation.

After retirement she seriously began her journey with family genealogy and research and has been working on it for more than 15 years. Before archived records became more available online, she traveled across the United States in a motor home, stopping at many of the more prominent archive facilities, genealogical societies, and libraries. Along the way she visited and interviewed many Unga descendants of parents and grandparents who originated on Unga Island, reviewing their family photos and documents and identifying those who had lived in Alaska. Her perspective is that information found online is just the tip of a huge iceberg.



Figure 2 Anfesia Shapsnikoff courtesy of Ray Hudson

ANFESIA SHAPSNIKOFF – UNANGAĥ LEADER

Anfesia Shapsnikoff was born in Atka Village in the Andreanof Islands on October 1, 1901 and moved to Unalaska with her family when she was five years old, becoming a proficient basket weaver as well as a strong spokesperson for the Unangaĥ people (Shapsnikoff and Hudson 1974). Anfesia lived through World War I, the 1918 influenza pandemic, the Great Depression, and World War II. In 1969, only four years before her passing, Anfesia published a series of admonitions to the Unangaĥ people which were published in a weekly newspaper called *The Unalaskan* and then later republished in *Unuġulux Tunusanġin: Oldtime Stories* (R. Hudson 1992). Anfesia's admonitions include the following prescient warning about unknown people arriving in the Aleutians to take Unangaĥ things:

Things I heard of long ago are happening. Unknown people are coming, taking over our land and the things we made our living with. So let's get together and prevent these by speaking up (November 16, 1969, 215).

For Anfesia, the solution to the wholesale thievery that she witnessed by people from outside of the region was to name it, to gather people together who acknowledge that pilfering is wrong, to have the courage to speak against those who steal or rob, to stop it, and to prevent additional future loss. After Anfesia passed away in 1973, the "Little Granma" was recognized by the Alaska Legislature as a "lifelong resident of Unalaska [who] devoted her life to preserving the colorful heritage of the Aleut people... she was a noted community organizer who continually worked ... for the betterment of her people..." (R. Hudson 1986, 322-323).

Anfesia attended the public school with Benny Benson in Unalaska. Author Ray Hudson noted, "By the time they were in school, the public school had left the confines of the Jesse Lee Home and become its own institution (although with heavy input from the Methodist workers at the

Home.)”⁹ While traveling for the Alaska Centennial in 1967, she expressed frustration that no credit for the design of the Alaska flag was given to Unalaska (R. Hudson 1992, 183). Anfesia was not large physically, but she stood up tall to protect the Unangaĥ people. Anfesia knew Benny Benson and attended school with him. She knew of some of his artwork and his writings. Anfesia likely knew Benny’s mother Tatiana who was born and raised in Unalaska as well as her parents who lived in Unalaska, only a short walk from Anfesia’s home. If Anfesia was frustrated that no credit was given to Unalaska in the designing of the Alaska flag, one can only imagine how she would have felt if she discovered that people outside of the region would attempt to take Benny Benson himself out of his mother’s Unangaĥ cultural heritage and misappropriate him into other cultures. Please see Figure 2, courtesy of Ray Hudson.

ALASKA NATIVE VALUES & ARCTIC FAMILY TREE RESEARCH

The list of traditional Alaska Native values includes “Know Who You Are – You Are a Reflection on Your Family” (AlaskaNativeKnowledgeNetwork 2019). Within Unangaĥ values of the Aleutian and Pribilof Island region is the value, “Know your family tree, relations, and people’s history” (ANKN 2019). In Eastern Unangam tunuu (Aleut language), this value is *Tuman Ilaanuġitxin, Unangan maqaġtadqangin mataaġin matakun*; and, in Western Unangam tunuu, *Anġaġiisiin, ilaazat ama ulamis anġaġinangis maqaġsingis uġunuġtalagada* (APIA 2007).

Something is often lost in translation, and cached within this Unangaĥ value is an implied hypothesis that posits, if people are familiar with who they are, if people accurately know their family tree, relations, and people’s history, they will reflect the positive aspects of their ancestry and shield, prevent, or subdue negative aspects, that the reflections from generation to generation will be optimistic with the long-term trends being in a constructive direction for the benefit of individual, family, and village.

In addition, genealogy – the research of family tree lineages – is a basic tool in Arctic anthropology field work. Introductory anthropology textbooks present the basic concepts of family tree diagramming displayed with symbols representing females or males, interconnected relationships (for example, marriages), parents, and grandparents arranged in a vertical or horizontal pedigree. Master’s degree theses and doctoral dissertations from Arctic research projects over the years have included family tree diagrams to assist the reader in gaining a basic understanding of family tree dynamics within villages or regions.

AUTHORS OPEN TO FEEDBACK, NEW DATA, NEW INTERPRETATIONS

Our family tree research goals are to seek the truth – whatever the truth may be - and to be as accurate as possible given data- and time-constraints. As indicated in our abstract, we assert that Benny Benson’s maternal ancestry is Unangaĥ. We stand by our assertion, yet we remain open to feedback, to new data, and to new interpretations. To assist others, we have included as many screenshot images of our findings as possible so that others may easily review, refute, or substantiate our work. We have also elected to publish this paper on a site which does not require anyone to make payments so that this information may become available to a larger audience who can in turn provide feedback. We anticipate that additional information will be revealed; thus, we reserve the right to edit this document.

⁹ Personal Communication, Ray Hudson, 3/16/2022



Figure 3 Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church in Belkofski

OUR METHODS OF FAMILY TREE RESEARCH

Our methods of family tree research involved an initial literature review of Benny Benson's life to become familiar with a timeline of where he was born, where he lived, and where he died. We reviewed coauthor Martha Murray's Aleut DataBank - an extensive family tree database collected over decades - for basic genealogical information about Benny. We also reviewed as much of the data about Benny as we could locate including books, articles, films, audio, and newspaper articles. Then we conducted searches in Ancestry.com. We found secondary Russian Orthodox Church archives but transitioned to primary sources using sites such as FamilySearch.org, other sites, a scan of a document from the Library of Congress, and additional primary sources.

Each of us has our family-tree research strengths and weaknesses, and we relied upon Stenner Evans' help to translate older Russian archival records into English. After we had the names in Benny Benson's family tree, we conducted a second literature review to attempt to double check our preliminary findings. This process strengthened our findings because the connections to regions in the initial review were not clearly articulated in terms of duration of residency, occupations, or other indicators of connections to regions or tribes.

Much of the data we relied upon came from church records such as those scribed by Russian Orthodox priests in the Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church in Belkofski and other churches. When people are born, baptized, and married is of great importance to the Russian Orthodox church which trains their priests to collect accurate family tree information. Russian Orthodox priests must make five journals, their records must be accurate, and their handwriting must be neat, or they can face disciplinary action.¹⁰

We contacted a certified Russian language expert, Fyodor Soloviev, of RUSA, Inc. to assist with translating several documents. Fyodor ended up greatly assisting our research and became a co-author. Because we know that family tree records (birth, baptism, marriage, death) may contain information not otherwise available, we searched for as many records from within the Benson family tree as possible. In our research, we also attempted to locate information about Benny's Swedish ancestry, contacting Swedish Consulates, museums, and family history centers. We were not able to locate any other information other than he was reported to have been born in Sweden in the late 1800s; several documents reported he was born in Norway. The preparation of affidavits

¹⁰ Personal communication, Daria Safronova, 6/16/2021

and petitions for the Alaska State Museums and the Alaska Court System strengthened our paper, requiring us to conduct additional research and translate more documents.

After our paper was first published on March 10, 2022, we began receiving additional information which we incorporated into subsequent updates. Please see Figure 3, Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church in Belkofski, courtesy of USDA, Forest Service.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations are defined as parameters which narrow the focus of a study. The limitations of our research are that we focused mostly on family tree records. We did not utilize additional tools of family tree research such as DNA analysis or interviews with family members due to time- and resource-constraints. Additional limitations in our early versions of our paper included limited knowledge on locating and thoroughly translating Russian Orthodox records from the 1800s and 1900s as well as not having independent experts to review our findings.

DELIMITATIONS

Delimitations are defined as efforts to ameliorate limitations of a study. Following our research of family tree records, we expanded our research into a literature review to see if we could corroborate or refute our preliminary findings. Additional delimitations included increasing our skills in learning to navigate online sources of Russian Orthodox records (for example, available on www.familysearch.org) as well as the certified Russian translation services provided by RUSA, Inc.

Additional delimitations occurred during the research and writing of this paper after the Alaska State Museums assembled a panel of five Alaska history experts who reviewed the affidavit with attached documents to correct Benny Benson's date of birth. The panel voted unanimously to recommend the correction. Finally, we petitioned the Alaska Court System, utilizing documents discovered during the research for this paper to form a petition for a court order to correct Benny's date of birth and his mother's maiden name. Alaska Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman reviewed our petition and on February 28, 2022, issued a court order to the Health Analytics and Vital Records Section (HAVRS) to correct Benny's date of birth and mother's maiden name. These additional levels of scrutiny strengthened our paper.

SCIENTIFICALLY REPLICABLE

As we conducted our family tree research over the years, we worked towards a goal of researching in a manner that is systematic as well as scientifically replicable. Gagne, Wagner, Goals, and Keller (Gagne, et al. 2005) defined similar work in the field of instructional design as follows: "It is both *systematic* and *scientific* in that it is documentable, replicable in its general applications, and leads to predictable outcomes" (p. 18). Thus, we anticipate that others who conduct similar research may find similar results. With these goals in mind, we acknowledge any shortcomings (please see *Things We Did Not Locate*), documents we were unable to locate (for example, Benny's younger brother Carl Benson's birth certificate), and even some documents which may (or may not be) related to the Benny Benson family tree. Through the publication of this paper, we hope others will conduct additional research into Benny's history to refute or substantiate our findings and to get better prepared for the 100-year anniversary of the Alaska flag raising on July 9, 2027.

SECONDARY LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned above, after we started accumulating names in the Benny Benson family tree, we began a secondary literature review to see if we could locate these same names in other sources. Although the Russian Orthodox Church archives were excellent for identifying marriages, births, baptisms, and so forth, they were not the most definitive in terms of strongly connecting people to locations or additional information such as occupation that might help confirm or deny if someone was indeed from any specific region of Alaska. The information we learned from our secondary literature review will be integrated into the text below.

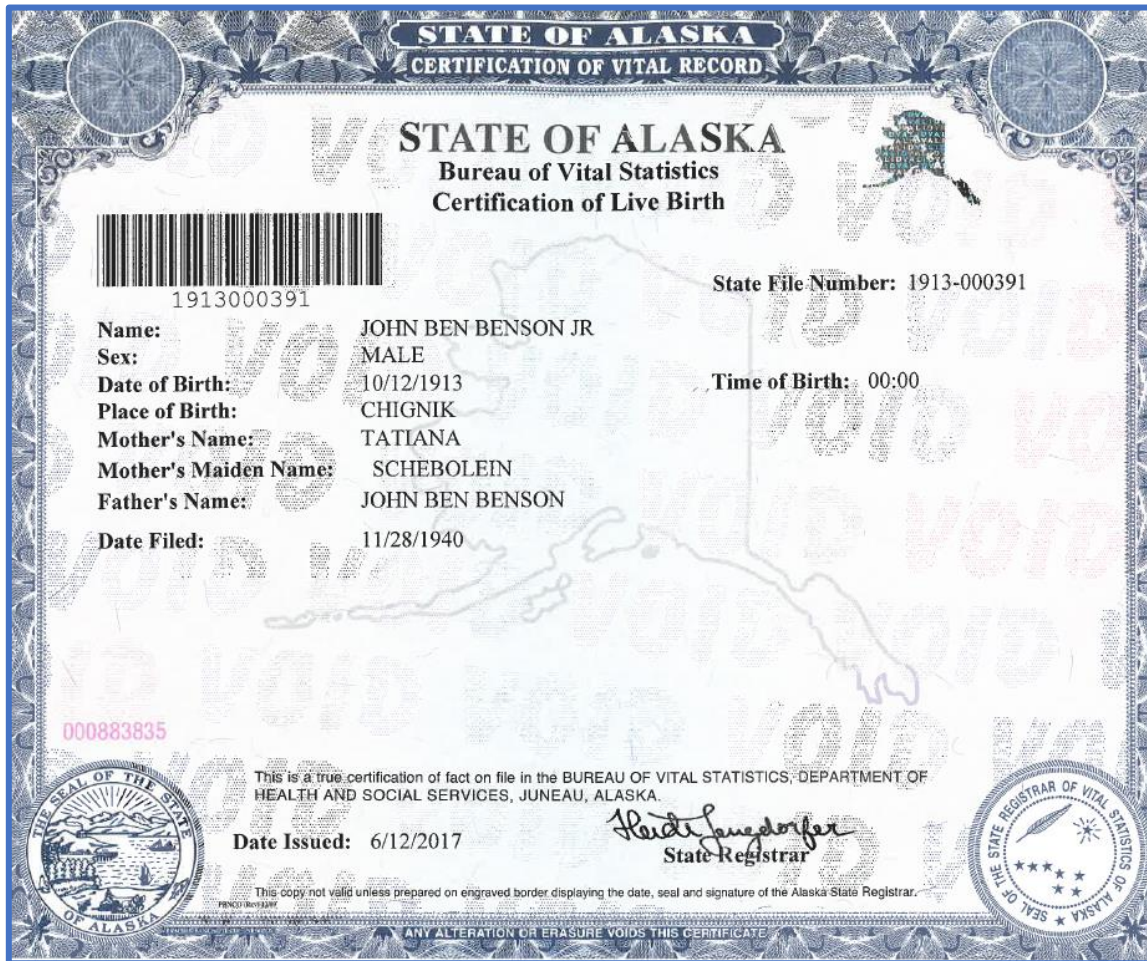


Figure 4 Benny Benson's Birth Certificate courtesy of State of Alaska HAVRS

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO BENNY BENSON

We began our initial literature review some time before 2017, finding Benny's official certificate of live birth, issued first in 1940 by the State of Alaska's Bureau of Vital Statistics and then reissued at our request on 6/12/2017. John Ben Benson, Jr.'s date of birth is listed as October 12, 1913 [sic] with the place of birth described as Chignik, mother's maiden name Tatiana Schebolein [sic], and father's name John Ben Benson (StateOfAlaska 1940). Please see Figure 4, courtesy of the State of Alaska.

We note "sic" because – as will be demonstrated below – Russian Orthodox records indicate that Benny was born on September 12, 1912 instead of October 12, 1913 over 13 months earlier than previously report. We note "sic" about Tatiana's maiden name because, as will be demonstrated below, her maiden name was Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina and not Tatiana

Schebolein. August 19, 2020, an *Affidavit for Correction of Birth Record* was filed with the State of Alaska's Health Analytics and Vital Records department to correct John Ben Benson, Jr.'s birthdate from 1913 to 1912. This process will be detailed in Findings below.

For clarification, we will point out to the reader that, when Tatiana married John Ben Benson, Sr., this was her second marriage. As will be presented below, Tatiana's first marriage was when she was age 16.

Benny had an older sister named Elizabeth [sometimes called Elsa or Elsie], and a younger brother named Carl; when Benny was age three, their mother Tatiana died (Potter 1989). In 1916, the father shipped the two boys to the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska and the daughter to a boarding school in Oregon (Spartz 2001). Benny and his younger brother Carl lived at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska for about nine years, from 1916 to 1925 (R. L. Hudson 2007). Benny arrived at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska around age four and left around age 13 – some of the most formative years of his life.

Benny is often described as an orphan. When we think of orphans today, we think of someone whose both parents have deceased; this was not the case with Benny. Benny's mother passed away when he was around age three, but his father John Ben Benson, Sr. continued to live until 1937 when Benny was age 25. Yet the father placed the two boys (Benny and his brother Carl) in the Jesse Lee Home, an orphanage. The father sent his daughter Elizabeth first to the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska and soon afterwards to a boarding school in Oregon. The father seldom visited the boys at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska, perhaps only twice during those nine years (Benson 1971). Benny did not see his sister Elizabeth until later in life and until shortly before she passed away when they were aged. For practical purposes, particularly for other orphans living at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska and Seward in the 1910s and 1920s, Benny was an orphan, and that is how he was often identified in news articles in the 1920s when he won the contest and the 1950s when Alaska became the 49th state in 1959.



Figure 5 Benny Benson around age 14
Alaska State Archives ASL-MS14-1-1-01

THE MOVE FROM UNALASKA TO SEWARD

In the fall of 1925, the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska closed due to high costs of basic supplies such as food, and on September 25, John Ben “Benny” and his younger brother Carl Benson boarded the ship *USS Bear* with 23 other boys and their chaperones for the six-day voyage to Seward where they joined the newly formed Jesse Lee Home in Seward (R. L. Hudson 2007). In 1926 Alaska Territorial Governor George Parks noticed Alaska had no flag; so – with assistance from the Alaska Department of the American Legion – a flag contest was announced on October 1, 1926 (Potter 1989, 85). To publicize the event, on November 8, 1926, KFQD radio station in

Anchorage broadcast news from the Anchorage American Legion Post, including a “contest in the local schools for the selection of designs for a territorial flag” (AnchorageDailyTimes 1926). Of the 142 designs by school children in grades 7 through 12, the flag design by John Ben Benson was chosen as Alaska’s flag (Spartz 2001). The young Alaska Native boy became widely known as Benny. Please see Figure 5 – detail photograph of Alaska State Archives American Legion Collection; designs by School Children for Alaska's Flag, 1927; ASL-MS14-1-1-01; used with permission.

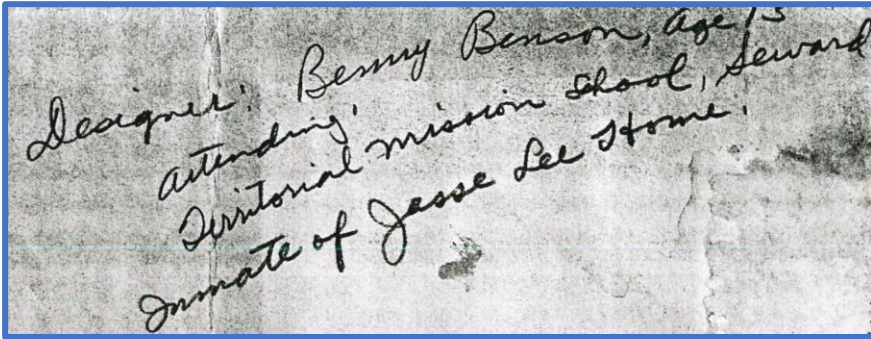


Figure 6 Benny Benson "Inmate" Verso Alaska State Archives ASL-MS14-1-1-01

BENNY BENSON – “INMATE”

The verso (backside) of the winning 1927 Alaska flag entry had the following written: Designer Benny Benson, age 13, attending Territorial Mission School Seward, Inmate of Jesse Lee Home. On the official entry, Benny was identified as an “inmate.” One dictionary definition of the word “inmate” is “any of a group occupying a single place of residence... especially a person in a prison or hospital.”¹¹ After the local contests were held in the villages, only the top three winners were forwarded to Juneau. Benny’s flag design was only being awarded third place by the panel of judges in the community of Seward. Benny almost withdrew from the contest.

Even if children today are inside a juvenile detention facility, identifying them in a contest as an “inmate” may be viewed as prejudicial against the entrant. Please see Figure 6 – detail photograph of verso. Alaska State Archives American Legion Collection; designs by School Children for Alaska's Flag, 1927; ASL-MS14-1-1-01; used with permission.

¹¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inmate>



Figure 7 Apollo Astronaut Buzz Aldrin with Benny's Moon Landed Flag; photo courtesy of Chris Arend Photography

BENNY'S SUPERLATIVE LUNAR-BOUND FLAG

As a brief recap, Benny Benson was a superlative flag designer, the “only Native American U.S. state flag designer, the youngest U.S. state flag designer, and the only orphan U.S. state flag designer... also in the top 8 percent of U.S. state flag designers” (Livingston 2017). Benny was also the “only living designer of a flag to be carried during the Moon landing” (Potter 1989, 204) on Apollo 11 by astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. In July 1969, Benny said, “I think the biggest thing that ever happened was when they flew the Alaska flag to the moon with other state flags...I think that was quite a deal” (Siegal 2017). The astronauts brought back Alaska's flag with moon rocks which were presented as a plaque to the State of Alaska in 1969; the plaque disappeared in 1973 following a museum fire in Anchorage and resurfaced in 2012 (Henrickson 2020) where Buzz Aldrin was able to visit the flag and moon rocks. See Figure 7; photograph courtesy of Chris Arend Photography.

TOP 8% OF US STATE FLAGS

Benny's flag was voted to be in the top 8% of designs of US state flags during the “Great NAVA Flag Survey of 2001” (Kaye 2001) following a survey of 100 NAVA (North American Vexillological Association) members with 337 members of the public from at least 20 countries participating. NAVA provided five principles of good flag design: Keep it simple; use meaningful symbolism; use 2-3 basic colors; no lettering or seals; be distinctive or be related. Benny's flag design excelled in these principles. In the survey of the 100 NAVA members, Alaska's flag was rated in the top five designs; if all Canadian flags are excluded, Alaska's flag was in the top four – the top 8% of US state flag designs.

GRADUATION & PASSING

Benny graduated from Jesse Lee School in 1932, moved to Seattle in 1936, got married in 1938, had two children, got divorced, and moved to Kodiak in 1950 (around age 38) where he worked as an airplane mechanic, passing away in 1972 at age 59 (Potter 1989). Benny is buried in the Kodiak City Cemetery in grave #198 on Mill Bay Road, about a mile northeast of Kodiak High School.

POOREST US STATE FLAG DESIGNER

Benny may also have been the poorest US state flag designer. Several of the US state flag designers were created in the 1800s and 1900s by people in positions of power, people in upper socio/economic class (Howe 2002). In 1927, Benny had been living in an orphanage most of his life, ten of his 13 years, first in Unalaska and later in Seward. The Jesse Lee Home was not a wealthy orphanage. Benny arrived at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska in 1916 at age 4 and stayed with the Jesse Lee Home in Seward until 1932 when he was about age 20. Sixteen of the first 20 years of his life (about 80%) were spent in an orphanage during which time his annual income may have been close to \$0.00. In fact, Benny's balance sheet for those 16 years might have been in the red (please see Indentured #217 below.) Even though he supposedly won \$1,000 in 1927 for the Alaska flag contest, this was not awarded until after he moved to Seattle in 1936. Of all the 50 US flag designers, Benny might have been the financially poorest US state flag designer.

ACCIDENTAL DISCOVERY

We knew that Benny and his younger brother Carl showed up in the 1920 US Federal Census at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska which is exactly where we expected them to be because that is where their father sent the boys and where they remained until shipped to Seward in 1925. But then, almost casually, one of our Unanga/Aleut genealogy friends (Carol Larsen Smith) mentioned finding Benny Benson in another 1920 US Federal Census in Chignik. People are supposed to show up only once in the US Federal Census in any given year. These findings will be discussed in detail below following geographical background information.

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The following sections begins with a brief introduction into geographical boundaries of the Unangaĥ, Sugpiat, and Alutiiq people followed by a discussion about various Alaska Native identities and terminology. Following this background section will be our findings.

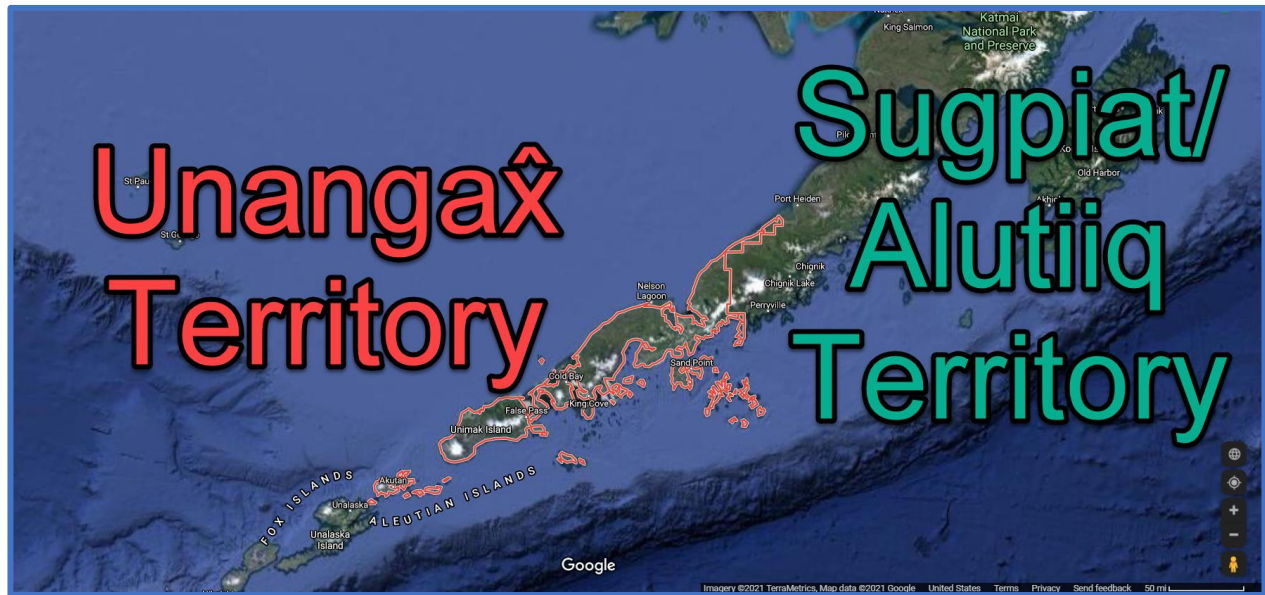


Figure 8 Unangaĥ Territory v. Sugpiat/Alutiiq Territory

THE THREE CHIGNIKS & THE DIVISION OF THE TERRITORIES

Benny Benson was born in Chignik which is in traditional Sugpiat or Alutiiq territory on the Alaska Peninsula. There are three Chignik communities: Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, and Chignik Lake. All three communities are located within about 15 miles of each other. Bristol Bay Native Corporation reported that Benny was born in Chignik Bay (BBNC 2014), but our research was not able to corroborate this. Future research may pinpoint which Chignik (Bay, Lagoon, or Lake) Benny was born in.

The traditional dividing line between Unangaĥ territory and Sugpiat/Alutiiq territory is just east of Port Moller on Herendeen Bay (Laughlin 1980) with a small portion extending towards Port Heiden. Unangaĥ territory is marked by the red outline in the map above. All three of the Chigniks are in Sugpiat/Alutiiq territory. The area in the map outlined in red is the Aleutians East Borough. The Chigniks are just southeast of the red outline. The distance from the Aleutians East Borough border to Chignik Bay is only 33 miles, a distance which Benny hiked in 1933 following a poor fishing season (Benson 1971, 24:37). Please see Figure 8, underlying map courtesy of Google Maps.

PREVIOUS IDENTIFICATIONS OF BENNY'S ETHNIC HERITAGE

Benny Benson has often been identified as Sugpiat or Alutiiq, perhaps because he was born in Chignik on the Alaska Peninsula which is in Sugpiat or Alutiiq territory. If his parents and grandparents were born in Sugpiat or Alutiiq territory, this would tend to substantiate that Benny was Sugpiat or Alutiiq. Benny Benson has also been identified as Sugpiat or Alutiiq perhaps because he later (around age 38) moved to Kodiak Island, the heart of Alutiiq or Sugpiat territory where he also passed away at age 59 and is buried.

If you search "Benny Benson Sugpiat" or "Benny Benson Alutiiq," you will find plenty of sources that identify Benny as Aleut, Sugpiat, or Alutiiq. And they are good sources too: Major

Alaska museums, libraries, historical societies, colleges, universities, Alaska Native organizations. Yet they merely state Benny was Alutiiq or Sugpiat with no references or citations – no attribution.

Wikipedia, on the other hand, has citations, and identifies Benny Benson as an “Alutiiq (Sugpiaq) born to a Swedish-American father, John Ben Benson, and Alutiiq-Russian mother, Tatiana Schebolein” (Wikipedia 2019). Wikipedia cited references to Benny’s ethnic identification, but, when one follows those references, they do not back the claims or there are no references. For example, one of the references cited in the Wikipedia article does not identify Benny as Alutiiq or Sugpiaq, but instead identifies his mother Tatiana as “Aleut-Russia” (UAJourney 2019). The other reference - from the Alutiiq Museum from Kodiak where Benny moved later in his life - reports that Benny was Alutiiq but does not cite any reference to back up its assertion. If you look at the edit history in Wikipedia, prior to 2015, Benny’s ethnicity was identified as Aleut, but, on October 12, 2015, “Kmoksy” edited the page, writing, “He is ‘Alutiiq’, not ‘Aleut’ without reference or citation (Wikipedia, Benny Benson 2019, edit history). Little additional information is provided about “Kmoksy.”

In reviewing sources that identified Benny Benson’s ethnic heritage, we located none that identified Benny Benson or his mother as Unangaĥ, Unangan, or Unangas (variations of the word Unangaĥ in the western Aleutians, eastern Aleutians and Pribilof Islands dialects).

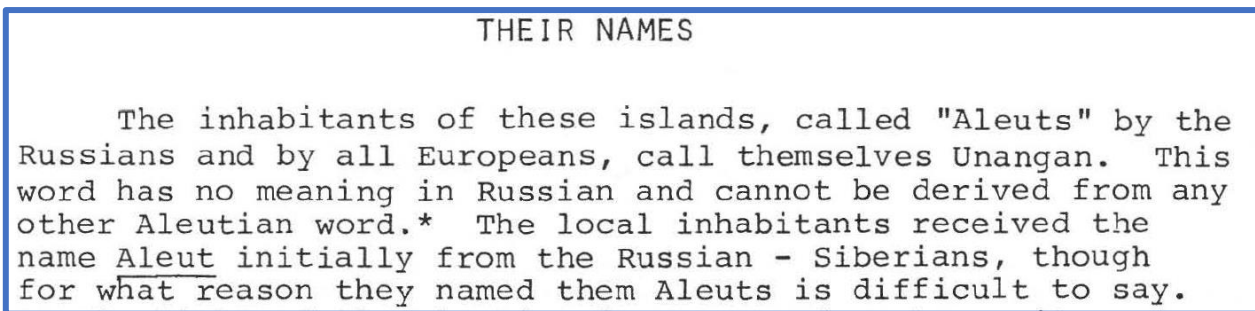


Figure 9 Names of the Inhabitants, Veniaminov, 1984, p. 157.

CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY THE TERM “ALEUT”

The use of the term “Aleut” initially focused on a specific group of people (Unangaĥ) in the 1700s but then became generalized by the 1800s. The strongest and earliest evidence of this ambiguity comes from Russian Orthodox Priest Ivan Veniaminov who lived in Unalaska from 1824 to 1834: “The inhabitants of these islands, called ‘Aleuts’ by the Russians and by all Europeans, called themselves Unangan” (Veniaminov 1984, 157). In the 21st century, the comprehensive term for the indigenous peoples from the Aleutian, Pribilof, and Shumagin Islands as well as the west end of the Alaska Peninsula is Unangaĥ.¹² Thus, when Russians first created the term “Aleut,” it referred to the people of the Aleutian Islands – the Unangaĥ. However, as Russian fur hunters pushed farther east and north in their quest for furs, so did the term. Consequently, the term became more indistinct, referring to people from diverse cultural backgrounds sometimes including the Sugpiat, the Alutiiq, the Yupik in the Bristol Bay region, the Chugach and Eyak of Prince William Sound. Please see Figure 9; courtesy of Ivan Veniaminov.

¹² <https://www.apiai.org/>



Figure 10 Unangaĥ, Sugpiat, & Alutiiq Territory

THE DECOLONIZED TERM: UNANGAĤ

Veniaminov noted that some people call themselves Aleut, but they really are not, they are “pseudo-Aleuts... [they are] not Aleut at all” (166). Oleksa (1987, 5) noted that the Unangaĥ people called themselves Aleut, but, “... some of their traditional enemies, the Sugpiaq of the Kodiak Archipelago and Prince William ... even more surprisingly, some Yup'ik-speaking Eskimos in the Bristol Bay and Lake Iliamna regions insist they too are Aleut.” Švarný Carlson (Alaskool 1995) asserted there were so many challenges with the name Aleut that she titled an article, “There is No Such Thing as an Aleut.”

Thus, in this article, we endeavored to use the more specific indigenous terms with their respective geographical locations: Unangaĥ (Aleutian Islands, Pribilof Islands, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula almost to Port Heiden); or, Sugpiat or Alutiiq (Alaska Peninsula east from Port Heiden and the Kodiak Island Archipelago). These more ancient terms are sometimes referred to as decolonized, that is, as they existed prior to European colonization. The map above may assist readers unfamiliar with the region. The islands outlined in red within the larger Unangaĥ region represent the Aleutians West region. Please see Figure 10; underlying map courtesy of Google Maps.

Next, we present our Findings, followed by Things Taken from the Unangaĥ People, Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion.

FINDINGS

The following sections summarizes our findings, organized roughly chronologically with the date of occurrence beginning with recently located photographs, news articles and corrected birth certificates following press releases; Benny's corrected heirloom birth certificate issued by Alaska's Health Analytics and Vital Records Section (HAVRS) on March 7, 2022; the court order issued by Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman on February 28, 2022 to correct Benny's birth

records; and then, walking back in time to Benny's passing in 1971 and then moving farther back in time to records of his maternal grandparents in 1842 and then even farther back in time to the origin of the Unanga̋ people in the Islands of the Four Mountains. The Findings will be followed by Things Taken from the Unanga̋ People, Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion.



Figure 11 Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church

MARCH 8, 2023: PHOTO OF ST. NICHOLAS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Around March 8, 2023, a photograph of Saint Nicolas Russian Orthodox Church was located on eBay. The notice stated that the location was Chignik Lake, Alaska. There was no additional information available such as the date of the photograph, the name of the photographer, or any other identifying information. The photograph is displayed here to assist future researchers in identifying Benny Benson's possible birthplace. Please see Figure 11, courtesy of eBay.

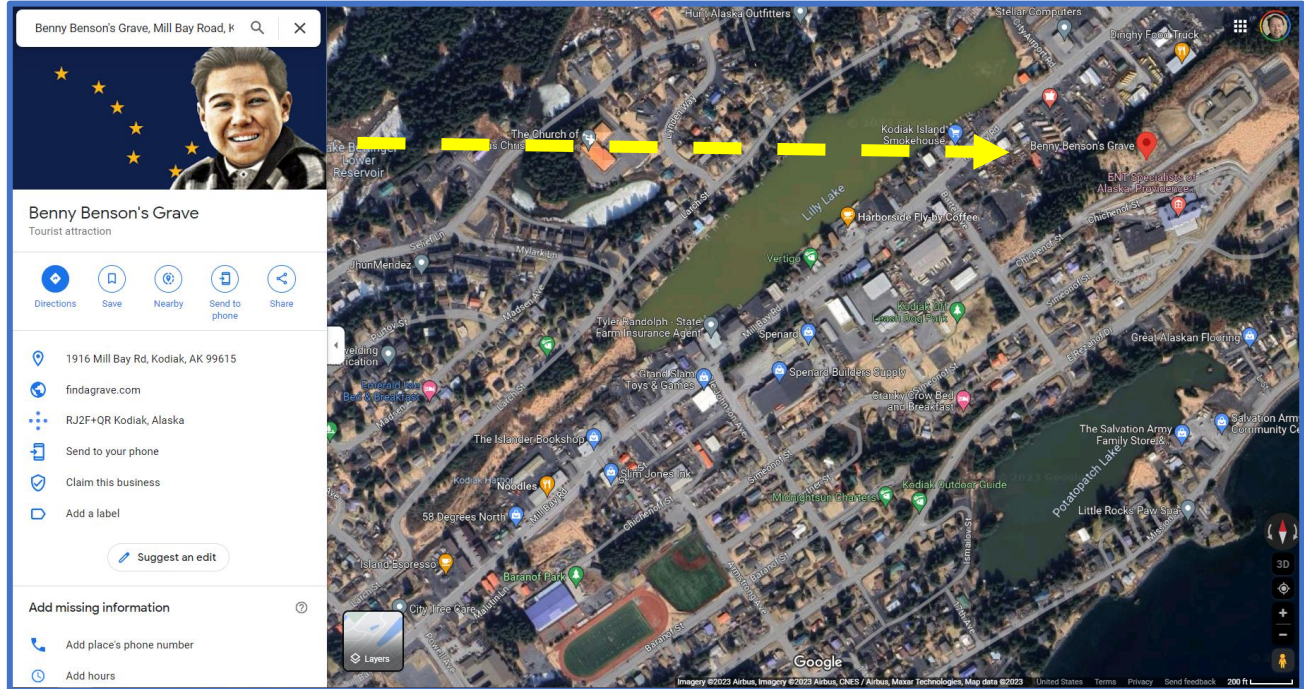


Figure 12 Benny Benson's Grave in Google Maps RJ2F+QR Kodiak, Alaska

SEPTEMBER 2022 BENNY BENSON'S GRAVE ADDED TO GOOGLE MAPS

Around September 2022, Benny Benson's grave in the Kodiak City Cemetery was added to Google Maps as a tourist attraction. The Copy Plus Code for the location is RJ2F+QR Kodiak, Alaska. Around February 2023, an animated photograph (original Alaska State Archives ASL-MS14-1-1-01; colored and animated by Fyodor Soloview) was added. Please see Figure 12, courtesy of Google Maps.



Figure 13 Rhonda McBride's KTOO News Article

MARCH 25, 2022: KTOO NEWS ARTICLE BY RHONDA MCBRIDE

On Friday, March 25, 2022, Rhonda McBride, KTOO News in Juneau, published a news article in the Juneau Afternoon section titled, *Benny Benson, Alaska flag designer: Setting the record straight* with a two-part audio recording about setting the record straight on Benny's birth certificate and cultural heritage.¹³ Please see Figure 13, courtesy of KTOO News.



Figure 14 The Cordova Times article by Margaret Bauman

MARCH 25, 2022: THE CORDOVA TIMES ARTICLE BY MARGARET BAUMAN

On March 25, 2022, Margaret Bauman with The Cordova Times published an article titled “True Story of Benny Benson Comes to Light after Nearly a Century.”¹⁴ Please see Figure 14 courtesy of The Cordova Times.

¹³ <https://www.ktoo.org/2022/03/26/benny-benson-alaska-flag-designer-setting-the-record-straight-rescuing-entangled-whales-2022-03-25/>

¹⁴ <https://www.thecordovatimes.com/2022/03/25/true-story-of-benny-benson-comes-to-light-after-nearly-a-century/>



Figure 15 Benny's Heirloom Birth Certificate "The Embrace"

MARCH 24, 2022: HEIRLOOM BIRTH CERTIFICATE

On March 24, 2022, the State of Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records section (HAVRS) issued a heirloom birth certificate for Benny Benson to Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association. The drawing on the certificate portrays "The Embrace" by Rie Munoz and shows an Alaska Native mother holding an Alaska Native infant. To date, we have been unable to locate any photographs of Benny's mother Tatiana, so this might be the closet visual depiction of how she loved and cared for her children. One reader in New Zealand wrote, "That's the most beautiful birth certificate I have ever seen...and looking at the young mother holding her child close, I was instantly that infant, wrapped in warmth, security and infinite love."¹⁵ The State of Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records sections provides these heirloom birth certificates; any profits go to assisting children throughout Alaska. See Figure 15.

¹⁵Personal communication, JBR, March 27, 2022

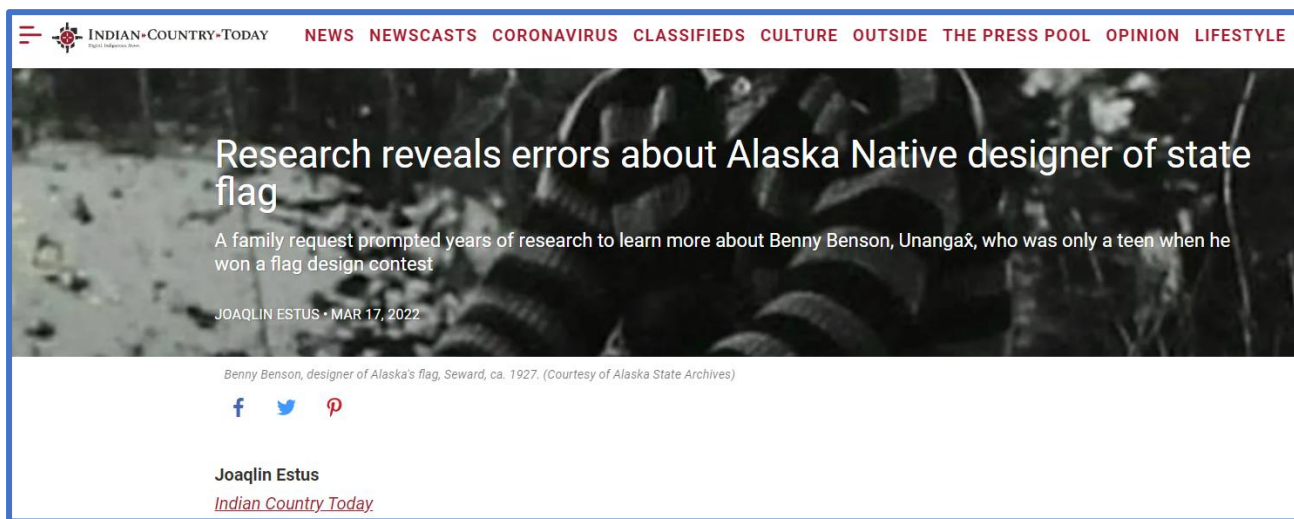


Figure 16 Indian Country Today March 17, 2022

MARCH 17, 2022: INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY NEWS ARTICLE

On March 17, 2022, Joaqlin Estes with Indian Country Today published an article titled *Research reveals errors about Alaska Native designer of state flag*.¹⁶ Please see Figure 16 courtesy of Indian Country Today.

¹⁶ <https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/research-reveals-errors-about-alaska-native-designer-of-state-flag>



Figure 17 Alaska Native News: Benny Benson

MARCH 11, 2022: ALASKA NATIVE NEWS ARTICLE

On March 11, 2022, Alaska Native News published an article titled Birth date of Alaska flag designer Benny Benson corrected a century later.¹⁷ Please see Figure 17 courtesy of Alaska Native News.



Figure 18 Kodiak Daily Mirror March 11, 2022

MARCH 11, 2022: KODIAK DAILY MIRROR

On March 11, 2022, the Kodiak Daily Mirror published an article titled, "Benny Benson's birth date corrected a century later."¹⁸ Please see Figure 18 courtesy of the Kodiak Daily Mirror.

¹⁷ <https://alaska-native-news.com/birth-date-of-alaska-flag-designer-benny-benson-corrected-a-century-later/60514/>

¹⁸ https://www.kodiakdailymirror.com/news/article_3b0b9c40-a0f3-11ec-8888-8b77df55d1c5.html

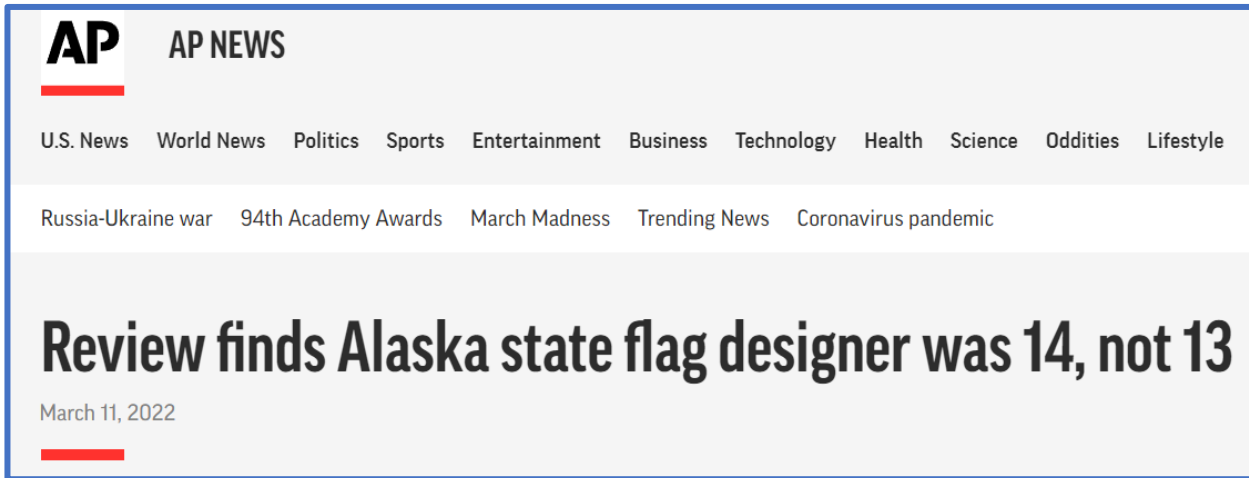


Figure 19 AP News March 11, 2022

MARCH 11, 2022: AP NEWS

On March 11, 2022, AP News published *Review finds Alaska state flag designer was 14, not 13*. This news article was republished in news outlets from the West Coast to the East Coast as well as in oversea publications. See Figure 19 courtesy of AP News.



Figure 20 KTOO in Juneau

MARCH 11, 2022: KTOO IN JUNEAU

On March 11, 2022, KTOO in Juneau published an article titled *Historians uncover Benny Benson's Unangax heritage nearly a century after he designed Alaska's flag* by Maggie Nelson.¹⁹ Please see Figure 20, courtesy of KTOO.

¹⁹ <https://www.ktoo.org/2022/03/11/benny-benson-alaska-flag-designer-unangax-heritage/>



Figure 21 ADN News Article About Benny Benson

MARCH 10, 2022: ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

On March 10, 2022, Tess Williams from the Anchorage Daily News²⁰ published a news article about the correction of Benny Benson's age. See Figure 21 courtesy of the Anchorage Daily News.



Figure 22 KUCB News Article on Benny Benson

MARCH 10, 2022: KUCB IN UNALASKA

On March 10, 2022, Thursday, at 4:30 PM, Maggie Nelson of KUCB²¹ in Unalaska published a news article about details of Benny Benson's cultural heritage being corrected. See Figure 22 courtesy of KUCB.

²⁰ <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2022/03/10/a-century-later-officials-correct-the-age-of-benny-benson-the-boy-who-designed-alaskas-flag/>

²¹ <https://www.kucb.org/regional/2022-03-10/historians-correct-details-about-benny-bensons-heritage-nearly-a-century-after-he-designed-alaskas-flag/>



Figure 23 Governor Mike Dunleavy's Facebook Posting

MARCH 10, 2022: GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Alaska State Governor Mike Dunleavy made a posting on his official Facebook page about the interesting news that Benny Benson was in fact 14 years old when he designed the Alaska flag. As of March 27, 2022, Governor Dunleavy's posting received 827 positive emoji responses including 646 thumbs up, 169 love hearts, 8 cares (smile face hugging heart), two laughs (ha ha), two wows, 32 comments, and 98 shares. See Figure 23 courtesy of Governor Mike Dunleavy.



Figure 24 State of Alaska's Press Release

MARCH 10, 2022: STATE OF ALASKA DHSS

On March 10, 2022, the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) made a press release about the correction of Benny Benson's date of birth. Please see Figure 24 courtesy of the State of Alaska.

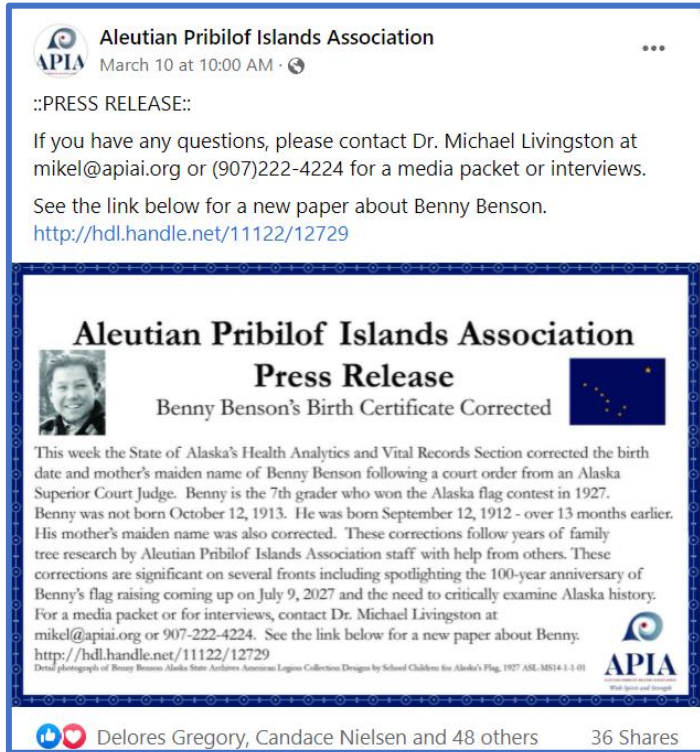


Figure 25 APIA's Press Release

MARCH 10, 2022: APIA'S PRESS RELEASE

On March 10, 2022, Thursday, at 10:00 am, APIA announced a press release about Benny Benson's birth certificate being corrected following a court order. The press release had a link to the journal article on Benny Benson's hidden Unangax̂ heritage. This press release was also announced on APIA's website, Aleut-L (a UAA list serve), and several other locations. As of March 13, it had 50 positive comments and 36 shares. See Figure 25 courtesy of APIA.

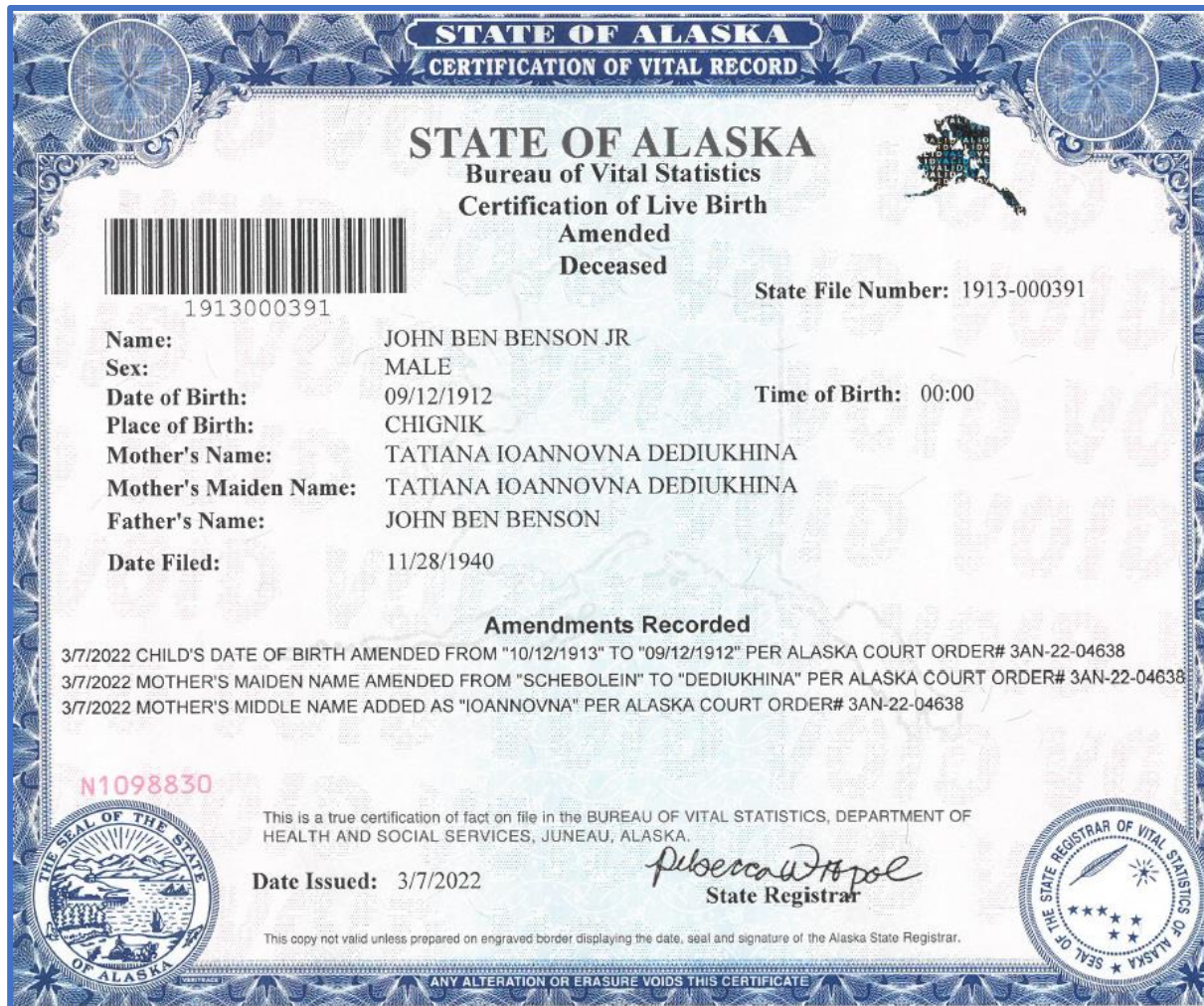


Figure 26 Benny Benson's Birth Certificate corrected March 3, 2022

MARCH 3, 2022: BENNY BENSON'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE CORRECTED

On March 3, 2022, the State of Alaska's Health Analytics and Vital Records Section (HAVRS) corrected John Ben Benson, Jr.'s birth certificate, noting that this is an amended birth certificate stemming from Alaska Court Order #3AN-22-04638 with his date of birth corrected from 10/12/1913 to 09/12/1912; his mother's maiden name corrected from Schebolein to Dediukhina; and, his mother's middle name added as Ioannovna. Please see Figure 26 courtesy of the State of Alaska's HAVRS.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA AT ANCHORAGE

In the Matter of the	}
Correction of Birth Record for:	
John Ben Benson, Junior	
Date of Birth Incorrect: October 12, 1913	
Date of Birth Correct: September 12, 1912)

CASE NO. 3AN-22-04638 CI

COURT'S ORDER FOR CORRECTION OF JOHN BEN BENSON Jr.'s BIRTH RECORD

A petition for Correction of Birth Records has been filed by Michael Livingston to correct John Ben Benson, Junior's birth date and mother's maiden's name. The court held a hearing on (date) February 28, 2022, and now makes the following findings and order.

FINDINGS

The court makes the following findings:

- 1940 Birth Certificate** The birth certificate for John Ben Benson Jr. filed at the Unga Territory Court in November 1940 states that he was born October 12, 1913 and that his mother's maiden name was Tatiana Schebolein. This certificate was filed 28 years following the birth with no supporting documents and was filed one month after the enactment of the Selective Service Act of 1940 during a Nationwide effort to register millions of people in the armed forces to defend the US in the pre-WWII ramp up.
- Russian Orthodox Church Birth Records** Petitioner has provided birth records filed by a Russian Orthodox priest written in June 1913 (approximately nine months after John Ben Benson, Jr. was born) at the Nikolaevskaya Chapel in Chignik, Alaska reporting that John Ben Benson, Junior was born on September 12, 1912. Petitioner's affidavit and documents were reviewed by a panel of five Alaska history experts assembled by the Alaska State Museum at the request of the State of Alaska's Health Analytics & Vital Records Section. The panel reviewed documents submitted by petitioner Michael Livingston and voted in unanimity to recommend the change of John Ben Benson, Jr.'s birthdate.
- Mother's Maiden Name** Petitioner has provided documents and certified translations which tend to substantiate that John Ben Benson Jr.'s mother's maiden name was Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina as reported on her birth records from December 29, 1879 filed in the Holy Ascension of Our Lord Russian Orthodox Cathedral in the Unangan village of Iliuliuk (Unangam Tunuu, the Aleut language, for, "The Beach that Curves") in Unalaska, Alaska. The last name Schebolein was her mother's married name.
- Court Order** Under this set of given circumstances, the State of Alaska's Health Analytics & Vital Records Section requires a court order to correct John Ben Benson, Jr.'s birth records.
- Public Interest** John Ben Benson, Jr. is also known as "Benny Benson" and was the winner of the Alaska Flag contest in May 1927; thus, correcting his birth records is a matter of public interest.

ORDER

The court orders that the State of Alaska shall, pursuant to 7 AAC 05 Vital Records, make the following Corrections of Birth Records of John Ben Benson, Jr.:

- John Ben Benson, Jr.'s date of birth be corrected to September 12, 1912.
- John Ben Benson, Jr.'s mother's maiden name be corrected to Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina.

<p>2/28/22</p> <p>Date hereby certified true and correct copy of this order shall be filed in the office.</p> <p>ATTEST Clerk of the Superior Court at Anchorage</p> <p>By: <u>[Signature]</u> Deputy Superior Court Clerk Date</p> <p>VS-608 (01/2022) (int) JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT ORDER CORRECTION OF BIRTH RECORD Page 1 of 1</p>	<p><u>[Signature]</u> Signature of Judicial Officer</p> <p><u>ADOLF ZEMAN</u> Printed Name</p> <p>7 AAC 05 Vital Records 7 AAC 05.875 Corrections & Amendments I certify that on <u>2/28/22</u> a copy of the following was mailed/e-mailed to each of the following at their addresses of record.</p> <p><u>M. Livingston + Tatiana Dediukhina</u> <u>[Signature]</u> Administrative Assistant</p>
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Figure 27 Court Order Issued February 28, 2022

FEBRUARY 28, 2022: COURT ORDER TO CORRECT BENNY'S BIRTH RECORDS

On February 28, 2022, Monday, at 2:00 PM, before the Honorable Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman, with Judicial Assistant Johanna Montanez, an evidentiary hearing was held in 3AN-

22-04638CI, with Michael Livingston, petitioner, versus the Bureau of Vital Records, respondent, in courtroom 503, Nesbett Courthouse, 825 West 4th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska.

Although the “versus” may appear to imply an adversarial relationship between the petitioner and the respondent, perhaps stirring images of one attorney verbally battling another attorney in a courtroom setting, such was not the case. Our relationship with the State of Alaska’s Health Analytics and Vital Records Section (HAVRS) has been polite, cordial, and professional. HAVRS provided kind, patient encouragement throughout this process. HAVRS’s insistence on a high level of standards while working with vital records resulted in more thorough research on our part, a stronger research paper, and higher evidentiary standards of documents that we presented to the Alaska Superior Court. After listening to sworn testimony of the petitioner and reviewing the petition with attached notarized documents, Judge Zeman signed and issued the court order.

This may be the first ever court order issued by the Alaska Superior Court that changes Alaska history and contains Unangam tunuu (Aleut language). Please see Figure 27, courtesy of the Alaska Court System.



Figure 28 Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman

FEBRUARY 16, 2022: SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE ADOLF ZEMAN

Our elders tell us that things happen for a reason, and so it may be with the judicial assignment of the petition to correct Benny Benson’s birth certificate to the Honorable Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman. On February 16, 2022, the initial judicial assignment was given to the Honorable Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman. Judge Zeman was born and raised in Anchorage where he attended East High School²² located on Northern Lights Boulevard which runs parallel to Benson Boulevard – named in honor of Benny Benson. East High School contains the Benson Building.

Judge Zeman attended the University of Alaska Anchorage and graduated from Gonzaga University School of Law in Oregon. His public service includes director of *Special Olympics Alaska*, and his interests include fishing and camping. When the court clerks received the new initial filing to correct Benny’s birth records, they had not received a similar filing and reached out to Judge Zeman for judicial guidance. See Figure 28, Superior Court Judge Adolf Zeman, courtesy of the Alaska Court System.

²² <http://courts.alaska.gov/judges/docs/avz.pdf>

2011 - 2022: CORRECTING BENNY BENSON'S BIRTH RECORDS

Several reporters asked how long we conducted research into Benny Benson's birth and cultural heritage records. This is a difficult question to answer because sometimes we begin a project, set it aside for a while, and then pick it back up. In searching our e-mails, we find references to Benny Benson dating back to 2011.

While researching Benny's family tree, we were provided with a copy of the 1940 birth certificate issued in the Unga Territorial Court. This certificate reported that Benny was born in 1913 and was filed some 27 years after his reported birth. With help from others, we located a Russian Orthodox Church records which indicated that Benny was born in 1912. In August 2020, we reached out to the State of Alaska's Health Analytics and Vital Records Section (HAVRS) who suggested that we locate a family relative familiar with the situation. We did, and the family member stated that the birth records were incorrect. The family member signed a notarized *Affidavit for Correction of Birth Record* which we submitted to HAVRS.

HAVRS then requested additional documents which we provided in the form of a multi-page affidavit. HAVRS contacted the Alaska State Museums who convened a panel of five Alaska history experts who reviewed our documents and unanimously agreed that Benny's date of birth should be corrected to 1912. HAVRS then stated that – given these circumstances - a court order from the Alaska Court System was required. In January 2022, while filling out the petition, we realized that Benny's mother Tatiana's maiden name also needed to be corrected, so we included that correction in our petition with the Alaska Court System. As indicated above, the Honorable Superior Court Judge Zeman issued the court order on February 28, 2022. On March 7, 2022, HAVRS corrected Benny Benson's birth certificate.

Demolition of Jesse Lee Home begins



The Jesse Lee Home is known for being the home of the Alaska state flag. (Marella Hein)

By [Cheyenne Mathews](#)

Published: Nov. 4, 2020 at 6:43 PM AKST



ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - The home of the Alaska state flag is finally being torn down after a months-long fight between the City of Seward and the Friends of the Jesse Lee Home.

The City of Seward voted to approve demolishing the home in July after the structure had sat unused since it was damaged during the 1964 earthquake.

Figure 29 Courtesy of Alaska News Source & Marella Hein

NOVEMBER 4, 2020 – RAZING THE JESSE LEE HOME IN SEWARD

On November 4, 2020, Cheyenne Mathews with Alaska News Source reported that the Jesse Lee Home in Seward was being demolished. The concrete stairs that Benny was standing on while holding his flag were also demolished. See Figure 29.

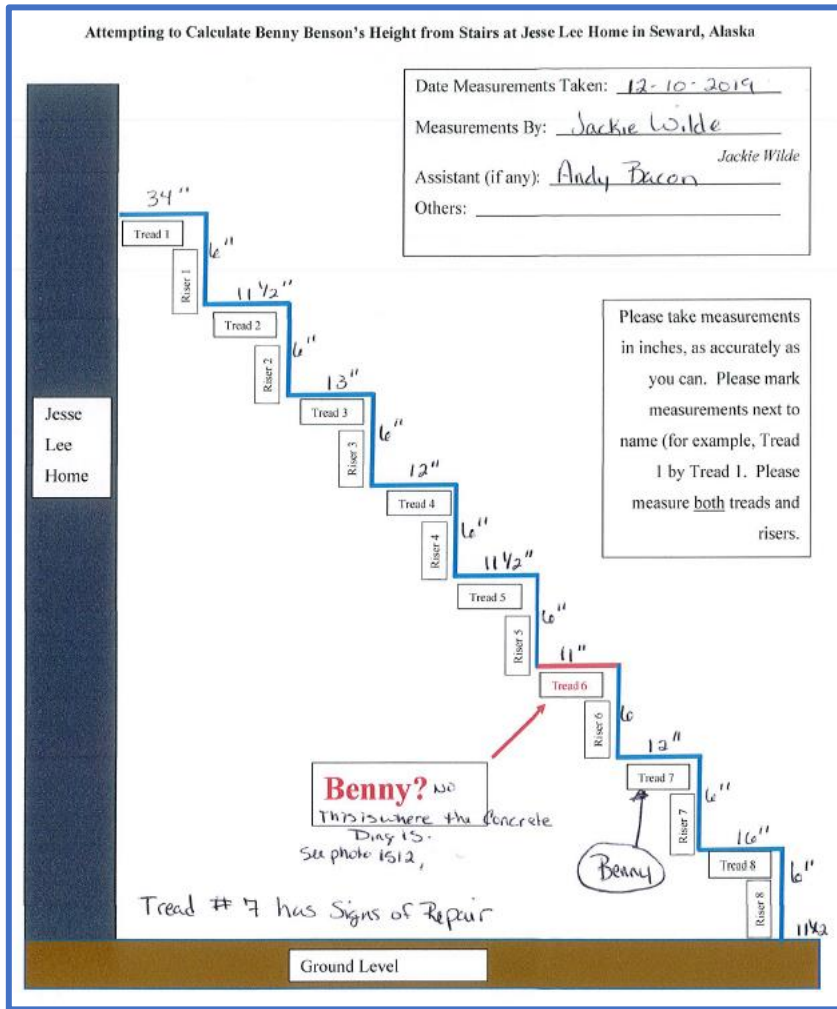


Figure 30 Measurements of Concrete Stairs West Side of Jesse Lee Home

DECEMBER 10, 2019: DOCUMENTING WEST STAIR MEASUREMENTS

On December 10, 2019, City of Seward employee Jackie Wilde assisted by Andy Bacon recorded measurements of the concrete stairs on the west side of the Jesse Lee Home in Seward so that future researchers could use the measurements to attempt to determine the height of Benny Benson in 1927 when he was standing on these same concrete stairs. As it turned out, it was fortuitous that these measurements were recorded since the Jesse Lee Home was demolished less than 11 months later. Jackie Wilde and Andy Bacon captured additional photographs and details which may assist in confirming that these are the stairs that Benny was standing on. See photographs in B. See also Figure 30.

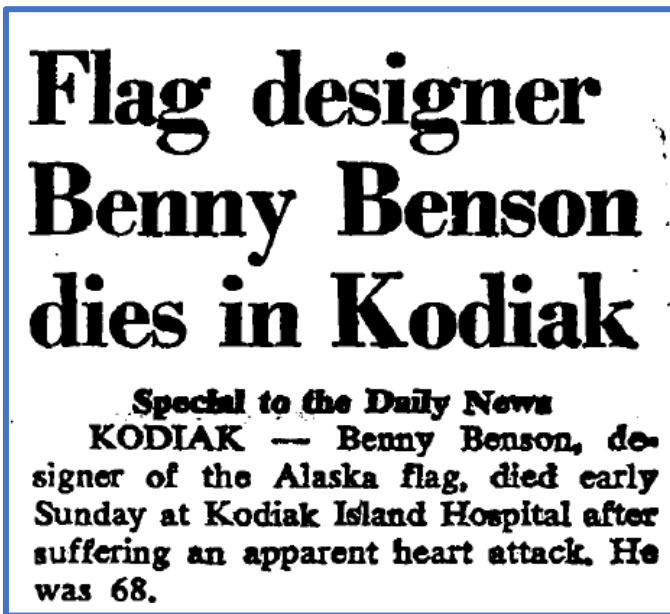


Figure 31 Benny Benson Passes

JULY 2, 1972: BENNY BENSON PASSES

The headlines of the Anchorage Daily News on Monday, July 3, 1972 read, “Flag Designer Benny Benson dies in Kodiak” (AnchorageDailyTimes 1972). Please see Figure 31. In this news articles, and other similar news articles, Benny was identified as “Aleut” or “Koniag Aleut,” pointing out that he died in Kodiak. This article erroneously stated that Benny was 68, nine years older than he was. If Benny was born September 12, 1912 and if he passed away July 2, 1972, he was age 59. An earlier news articles from the 1960s identified him as an “Indian boy” (CallerTimes 1960). Back in 1927, shortly after he won the flag contest, Benny was identified as “half white and half Aleut Indian” (Register-Gazette 1927). None of the family tree research conducted by the authors of this paper indicated that Benny Benson was “Indian.”

CIRCA SUMMER 1971: BENNY BENSON SAID HE DESIGNED FLAG IN UNALASKA

In May 2022, author Michael Livingston traveled from Homer to Unalaska on the M/V Kennicott to honor US Army Private George Fox, born in Unga Village, raised in Unalaska, the only known Unangaĥ soldier killed in action during World War II or any War since. During this visit, some additional findings were discovered as detailed below.



Figure 32 – Benny Benson, Coe Whittern, two boys, at Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska around 1971

On May 30, 2022, Memorial Day, during a presentation to honor Private George Fox in the big gymnasium at the Unalaska High School, Michael Livingston mentioned to the audience that the word Alaska originated in Unalaska and that Alaska flag designer Benny Benson's family originated in Unalaska. Following the presentation, Unalaska resident Coe Whittern approached Mike and told him that, shortly before Benny Benson passed away, he returned to Unalaska, visited him, and Benny said that he designed the Alaska flag in Unalaska, and that he felt bad that Unalaska did not receive credit for the design of the Alaska flag. Mr. Whittern said that these words came straight from Benny Benson himself.

On June 2, 2022, Livingston went to Coe Whittern's residence in Unalaska to get a detailed interview. Mr. Whittern was born in Peru, Indiana and is now age 76. He said he came to Unalaska in the summer of 1949 and lived in Unalaska until his father (C. Keith Whittern, age 38) and brother (Quentin K. Whittern, age 4) died in a boating accident in October 1957. Their boat capsized, and they could not get to shore, and died from exposure. He said his parents were the last in a string of Methodist missionaries that started with the Jesse Lee Children's Home that started nominally in 1890 and the building in which he now resides, the Boy's Dormitory, was built in 1903.

He said in two weeks or less after the tragedy, they moved back to southeast Michigan, Prattville. He said when he left Unalaska at age 11, he had an understanding that he would return to home in Unalaska. He said after he graduated from college, he returned in the summer of 1968 with a friend, Tom Wharton. He said he went to school to be a schoolteacher so he could return to Unalaska to teach. He said he taught one year in Michigan. He said he went to Adrian College in

Benny Benson's Hidden Unangax̂ Heritage

Adrian, Michigan. He said he and his wife got married June 22, 1969, and they drove across the country and arrived in Unalaska in July 1969. He said he was the second high school teacher and the first basketball coach.

He said for the first nine years, he taught school in Unalaska. He said he had experience in construction, and he purchased the mission block of land from the Methodist Church. He said his mom lent him money to buy the city block which included the Boy's Dormitory. He said he built his first house on this block from salvaged Army buildings, started in 1975 and finished in 1976. He said his youngest son Cory was born in that house on November 25th, Thanksgiving Day, in that house in 1976.

He said after nine years of teaching, he branched out, developed his building skills, building his first duplex on the block in 1977. He said Universal Seafoods came up in 1974 and started building their facilities; Dick Pace was the CEO of Unisea, and he hired his next-door neighbor, Ron Bundy, to be his construction superintendent, who had been a two-man construction company, to build a multi-dollar company. He said they hired young men with good character to build the company, almost all had dropped out of Bible school or college, and they were known locally as the "God Squad." They were taught well and loved construction and ended up staying in construction.

Mr. Whittern got his contractor's license and built a sixteen-unit rental building which he sold to skippers of crab boats, and then went to being a contractor for about three years, and then returned to being a home builder. As an owner-builder, he built several rentals in Unalaska and then started Unalaska Building Supply in 1980 that became True Value in 1990. He said now he is retired.

He said when he acquired the old mission house, Phyllis and he had to do an extensive amount of work to move into it. He said they moved into the house around 1969 and lived in it until they got the next house built on the lot in 1976. He said Benny Benson came out to Unalaska to reconnect with his roots and stuff a year before he died of cancer; he believes this was around 1972. He said Benny would have flown out on Reeve [Aleutian Airways]. He said he and Benny stood on the lawn of the Jesse Lee Boy's Dormitory, and a photograph of them was taken. He said by that time in his life, Benny had lost his right leg and was on crutches. See Figure 32.



Figure 33 Benny & His Wife in Coe Whittern's Home

His wife flew out with him; she was Aleut or Alaska Native. He said Benny and his wife visited them for one day, but they were in Unalaska for longer than that. He said Benny went through the entire house (the Jesse Lee Boy's Dormitory) and told him what used to be, everywhere, he's his solidest anchor for what was where, when. See Figure 33.

He said one of the things Benny said was, he wanted him to know, that even though Seward gets credit for him being from the Children's Home in Seward, he said, "Yes, I won the contest when I was living in the Children's home in Seward, I want you to know I designed the flag here in this house, here in Unalaska. It's unfortunate that Unalaska hasn't gotten credit for me designing the Territorial Flag in Unalaska."

He said they were probably in the northwest corners of the downstairs room.

This audio recorded interview with Coe Whittern was submitted to the University of Alaska Fairbanks Alaska and Polar Regions Collections and Archives in June 2022.

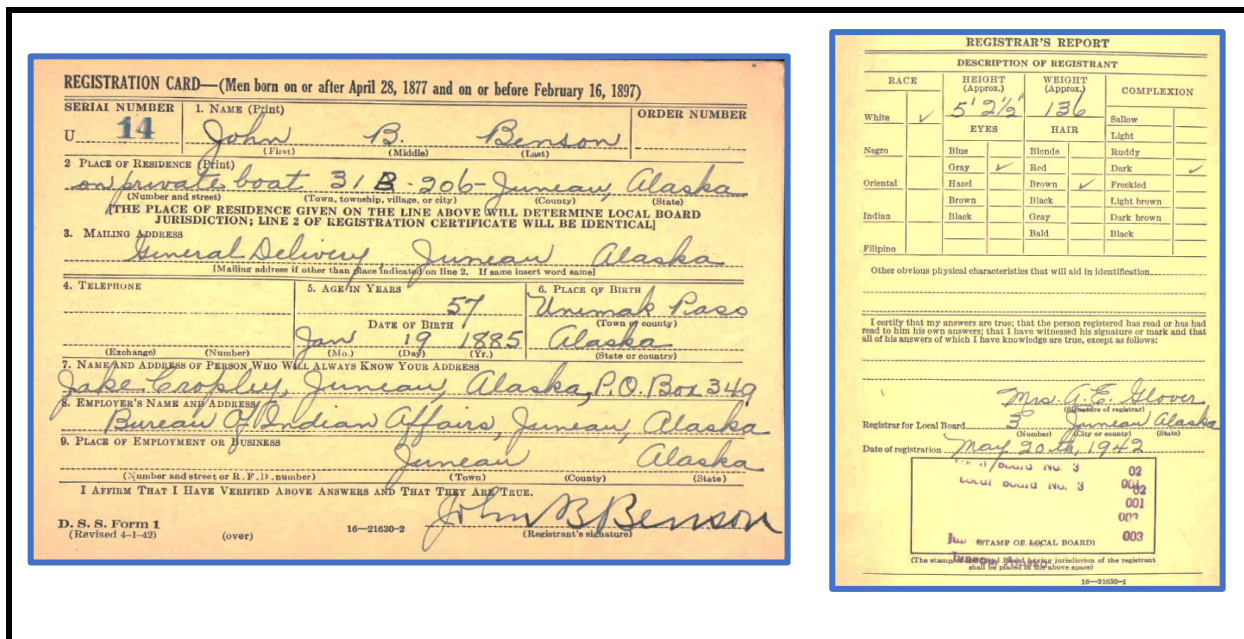


Figure 34 John B. Benson's WWII Registration

MAY 20, 1942: JOHN B. BENSON REGISTERS FOR WWII

On May 2, 1942, in Juneau, Alaska, John B. Benson registered for World War II. He was described as living on a private boat in Juneau, age 57, date of birth January 19, 1885, born in Unimak Pass, Alaska. Morzhovoi Village is located in Unimak Pass on the distal and of the Alaska Peninsula. His race is described as White, height 5' 2.5", 136 pounds, gray eyes, brown hair, dark complexion. Henry Swanson stated, "When they quite sea other hunting in 1910, there was one Benson. He was the grandfather of this kid that drew the Alaska flag, Benny Benson" (R. L. Hudson 1982, 22). It is unknown if this John B. Benson is related to Benny Benson's grandfather mentioned by Henry Swanson or otherwise related to the Benny Benson family. Please see Figure 34 courtesy of www.ancestry.com and the National Archives.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1940: SELECTIVE TRAINING & SERVICE ACT

On September 16, 1940, the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 was enacted, requiring men ages 21 to 45 to register, the Nation's "first peacetime draft."²³ The mission of the act was to "provide for the common defense by increasing the personnel of the armed forces of the United States and provide for its training."²⁴ By 1945, over 10 million men were drafted. Some of those men who attempted to register did not have birth certificates resulting in a Nationwide scramble to quickly issue birth certificates so that the United States could be defended from global hostilities occurring in the early 1940s.

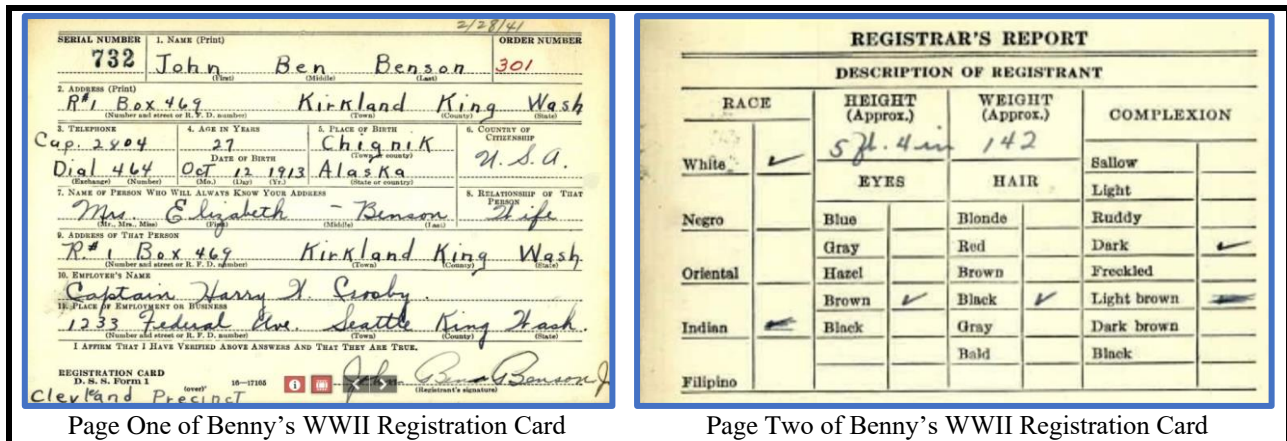


Figure 35 Benny Benson's WWII Registrar's Report

1940 OCTOBER 26: BENNY REGISTERS FOR WWII

About five weeks after the Selective Training and Service Act was enacted, on October 26, 1940 in Kirkland, Washington, John Ben Benson registered to join the US military. Even though it does not state Junior, this was Benny Benson. On the first page of the form, he wrote that his age was 27, and that his date of birth was October 12, 1913. On the second page of the Registrar's Report, the description of the registrant included race, height, weight, color eyes, color hair, and complexion. Under "race," it appears that a check mark was placed next to "Indian," but it was then scratched out, and instead "White" was checked. (In the early 1900s, racism against Alaska Natives was prevalent, and a fair number of Alaska Natives self-identified as White to avoid blatant discrimination.)

Benny was described as 5' 4" tall, weighing 142 pounds, brown eyes, and black hair. Under complexion, it appears that a check mark was placed next to light brown, it was scratched out, and then a check mark was placed next to dark. It is possible that, when he registered, he was told that he needs his birth certificate, and this may have triggered the application for Standard Certificate of birth with Unga Court some 20 days later. Please see Figure 35 courtesy of www.ancestry.com and the National Archives.

²³ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/2140942/first-peacetime-draft-enacted-just-before-world-war-ii/>

²⁴ <https://uslaw.link/citation/us-law/public/76/783>

000391 ~~12713~~

Registrar's No.

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

Territory of Alaska
Office of
REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS

1. PLACE OF BIRTH
Village or Town Chignik
(If in remote section, give distance and direction from town)

(No. St.)

2. FULL NAME OF CHILD John Ben Benson Jr.
(If child is not yet named, make supplemental report as directed.)

3 Sex of Child <u>Male</u>	4 Twin, triplet or other (Answer only in event of plural births)	A N B	Number in order of birth	5 Legiti- mate? <u>Yes</u>	6 Date of birth <u>Oct. 12, 1913</u> (Month) (Day) (Year)
-------------------------------	---	----------	--------------------------	-------------------------------	---

7 Full Name <u>John Ben Benson</u>			13 Full Maiden Name <u>Tatiana Schebelein</u>		
8 Residence <u>Chignik</u>			14 Residence <u>Chignik</u>		
9 Color or Race <u>White</u>			15 Color or Race <u>Russian-Native</u>		
Age at last Birthday <u>33</u> (Years)			Age at last Birthday <u>Unkno n</u> (Years)		
10 Birthplace <u>Sweden</u>			16 Birthplace <u>Unalaska</u>		
11 Occupation <u>Fisherman</u>			17 Occupation <u>Housewife</u>		

NOV 28

Form 1
IS A PERMANENT RECORD
& birth. SEPARATE RETURN must be made for each and the number of each at States Commissioner of the precinct in which the birth occurred, as required

Figure 36 Standard Certificate of Birth courtesy of Alaska Vital Statistics

NOVEMBER 16, 1940: STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

On November 16, 1940, a Standard Certificate of Birth was filed at the Alaska court in Unga Village in the Shumagin Islands, certifying that John Ben Benson Jr. was born October 12, 1913, some 27 years beforehand (AlaskaVitalStatistics 1940). The form lists the father as John Ben Benson, residence Chignik, color or race White, age at last birthday 33, birthplace Sweden, occupation fisherman. The form lists mother as Tatiana [two spellings of Tatiana with one scratched out] with the last name as Schobelein (or Schebolein), resident of Chignik, color or race Russian-Native, age at last birthday unknown, birthplace Unalaska, occupation housewife. Please see Figure 36, courtesy of HAVRS.

On the first page of the birth certificate, it was implied that the person signing the form was present at Benny's birth; but, on the second page, it implied that the person was not present. This caught our attention because a person cannot be both present and not present. This contradiction appeared to be irreconcilable and formed part of the basis for our petition to the State of Alaska's Health Analytics and Vital Records Section (HAVRS). In retrospect, it is possible that, under the pressure of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 and the global build up to World War II, that several birth certificate applications across the Nation contained similar contradictions.

Yet there were additional possible contradictions in the birth certificate that also caught our attention. For example, the form said the person signing the form knew Benny's mother Tatiana yet did not know her maiden name or age. Another area of concern was the long-time span between birth and the filing of the form (about 27 to 28 years) with no supporting documents, so the dates and other information may have been based upon memory. Research over the years has indicated that, the more time that passes, the less reliable human memory can become.²⁵

²⁵ Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology, Hermann Ebbinghaus, New York: Dover Publications, 1964

58. Iluulux̂ (1791-), Iluulax̂ (1826-) (bay) going in a half circle - Unalaska Village;

Figure 37 The Beach that Curves - Aleut Dictionary

UNALASKA, ILUULUX̂, ILUULAX̂, ILIULIUK

The birth certificate noted that Benny's mother Tatiana's birthplace was Unalaska which is a village located on Unalaska Island in the Fox Islands of the Aleutian Islands, traditional Unangax territory. Another recent name for Unalaska is Iliuliuk, a name which translates to the "beach that curves" due to the beach in front of the village having a semi-lunar, semi-circular curved shape.²⁶ Older names for Unalaska from 1791 and 1826 include "Iluulux̂ ... Iluulax̂."²⁷ Please see Figure 37, courtesy of the Aleut Dictionary.

MR. BEN BENSON FUNERAL
Funeral services for Ben Benson, 60 years old, who died yesterday, will be held at 11 o'clock tomorrow at Bonney-Watson's. Burial will be in Lake View Cemetery.
Mr. Benson, a retired sailor and fox farmer, was born in Sweden, but had been an Alaska resident for the past forty-five years. He is survived by his widow, Anna Benson; a daughter, Lesa Benson, and two sons, Carl and Ben Benson, Jr.

Figure 38 Benny's Father's Obituary

DECEMBER 1937: BENNY'S FATHER'S FUNERAL NOTICE

On December 23, 1937, Thursday, the Seattle Daily Times posted Mr. Ben Benson's funeral notice for December 24, Christmas Eve, at Bonney-Watson funeral home followed by a burial at Lake View Cemetery. The notice identified Ben Benson as a retired sailor, fox farmer, born in Sweden, an Alaska resident for 45 years, leaving behind his widow Anna Benson, daughter Lesa Benson, sons Carl and Ben Benson, Jr. The notice said nothing about Ben Benson being the father of the Alaska flag designer; nor did it identify him as the father of Alfred Benson (see below). See Figure 38 courtesy of the Seattle Daily Times and www.genealogybank.com.

²⁶ Aleut Dictionary, Knut Bergsland, 1994, Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center

²⁷ Aleut Dictionary, Knut Bergsland, 1994, Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, p. 603

7. AGE				
Years	Months	Days	if LESS than 1 day,	
60		 hrs. or mins.	
OCCUPATION	8. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done as spinner, sawyer, bookkeeper, etc. Fox Farmer			
	9. Industry or business in which work was done, as silk mill, sawmill, bank, etc.			
	10. Date deceased last worked at this occupation (month and year) Apr. 1935		11. Total time (years) spent in this occupation 14	
12. BIRTHPLACE (city or town and State or country):				
Sweden				
FATHER	13. NAME: - - - Benson			
	14. BIRTHPLACE (city or town and State or country):			
Sweden				
MOTHER	15. MAIDEN NAME: No record			
	16. BIRTHPLACE (city or town and State or country):			
Sweden				

Figure 39 Washington State Vital Statistics Certificate Alfred Benson's Father

DECEMBER 22, 1937: BENNY'S FATHER PASSES AWAY

The sad passing of Benny's father is documented in *God Flies Benny's Flag*,²⁸ and by Benny himself in an interview with Jim Duros in 1971. John Ben Benson, Sr. had challenges with blood circulation in his legs, and one of his legs had to be amputated, and then tragically an infection set in. Benny helped his father travel from Alaska to a hospital in Seattle where he passed away in December 1937. John Ben Benson Sr.'s death certificate was reviewed to see if it revealed any information about Benny's cultural heritage.

On December 22, 1937 at 5:50 AM in the King County Hospital in Seattle, Benny's father passed away. Even though he was identified as John Ben Benson, Sr. in other documents, on his death certificate, he was identified as Benjamin Benson. His wife was identified as Anna Benson. His age was described as 60, his occupation fox farmer, having last worked in April 1935, with 14 years spent as fox farmer.

He had lived in Seattle for only three months, and, being of foreign birth, had lived in the United States for 48 years, indicating that he arrived in the United States in 1889 which is about three years before reported in the 1920 US Federal Census. If he was age 60 in 1937, that would place his year of birth around 1877; whereas, in the 1920 US Federal Census, his age was written down as 45, placing his year of birth around 1875. The informant on the certificate was Ben Benson, Jr. whose address was 1132 10th Avenue in Seattle, Washington. Benny's father is buried in the Lake View Cemetery in Seattle east of Lake Union.²⁹ Please see Figure 39 courtesy of www.familysearch.org.

²⁸ *God Flies Benny's Flag*, Velma Moos Potter, 1989, Seattle: Frontier Publishing

²⁹ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/115098941/benjamin-benson>

BIRTHPLACE (city or town and State or country):	Seattle, Wash.
13. NAME:	Benjamin Benson
14. BIRTHPLACE (city or town and State or country):	Sweden
15. MAIDEN NAME:	Anna Lowell
16. BIRTHPLACE (city or town and State or country):	Alaska
INFORMANT (name and address):	Records-King County Hosp. Seattle, Wa.

Figure 40 Alfred Benson's Parents from Alfred Benson's Death Certificate

NOVEMBER 1937: BENNY'S HALF-BROTHER ALFRED

On November 15, 1937, baby boy Alfred Benson was born prematurely in Seattle and only survived for six hours. The address was 1132 10th Avenue in King County, Washington. The father was listed as Benjamin Benson, born in Sweden. The mother was listed as Anna Lowell, birthplace Alaska.³⁰ The father was around age 60, and the mother was around age 39, having been born in 1898. November and December 1937 were likely very sad times in the Benson home on 10th Avenue in Seattle with John Ben Benson, Sr. and infant Alfred Benson passing away. Alfred was buried in Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Seattle on December 2, 1937 in grave 16, lot 32, section 18.³¹ The following year, John Ben Benson, Jr. returned to Alaska. Today, one of the closest businesses to the address where the Benson family lived is a business called Bright Horizons, an early education preschool, that offers "quality, year-round programming."³² Bright Horizons has preschools in Anchorage and Fairbanks. Although we were unable to locate the gravesite of Anna (sometimes called "Annie" Lowell, we located her father Frank Lowell's gravesite in Chignik Lagoon.³³ Several locations in Seward were named after the Lowell family.³⁴ Please see Figure 40 courtesy of www.familysearch.org and the National Archives.

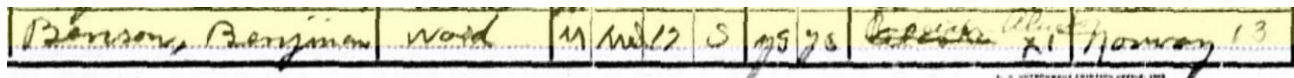


Figure 41 Benjamin Benson in the 1930 US Federal Census

1930: US FEDERAL CENSUS SEWARD, ALASKA

In the 1930 US Federal Census, Benjamin Benson was identified as a ward of the Jesse Lee Home in Seward, Alaska. This census information was enumerated on December 13, 1929. Benny was identified as a male of mixed blood, age 17, single, could read and write, born in Alaska; father born in Norway; mother born in Alaska/Russia. This was one of the first documents which reported that Benny's father was born in Norway; other reports indicated Sweden. Please see Figure 41, courtesy of www.ancestry.com and the National Archives.

³⁰ Washington State Department of Health, Division of Vital Certificates, Certificate of Death, Record No. 4190, Registered No. 4419, courtesy of www.familysearch.org.

³¹ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/236575250/alfred-benson>

³² <https://www.brighthorizons.com/seattle/seattle-daycare>

³³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/112320664/frank-lowell>

³⁴ <https://www.nps.gov/people/franklin-lowell.htm>

JULY 9, 1927: ALASKA FLAG DAY

On July 9, 1927, the first Alaska flag was raised on a flagpole at the Jesse Lee Home in Seward. At the time, it was believed that Benny was born on October 12, 1913, so on July 9, 1927, he was believed to be age 13. But if Benny was born on September 12, 1912, on July 9, 1927, he would have been 14 years of age. A small crowd assembled to witness the raising of the first Alaska flag. At that time, there were 48 states in the United States, and the US flag with 48 stars was first attached to the lanyard on the flagpole. Then Benny's flag was attached to the lanyard below the US flag. Benny's flag was much smaller than the US flag, only about 1/8th the size. Photographs taken that date indicate there was a stiff wind breeze blowing. During the flag raising ceremony, Benny received his first prize for winning the flag contest – a gold watch.³⁵ Seventy years later Alaska State Senator Arliss Sturgulewski penned the Alaska Flag Day law to “honor the creation of the design of the official flag of the state by Benny Benson.”³⁶ Friday, July 9, 2027 will be the 100-year anniversary of the raising of the Alaska flag.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1925: ARRIVAL AT SEWARD, ALASKA

As mentioned above (see *The Move from Unalaska to Seward*), on September 25, 1925, the boys with their chaperones boarded the USS Bear and the voyage to Seward lasted around six days, placing Benny's arrival at the Jesse Lee Home in Seward around September 30, 1925.

Benson Bennie G	Pupil	Male	Mixed	7	Single
Benson Carl	Pupil	Male	Mixed	5	Single

Figure 42 US Federal Census Unalaska Jesse Lee Home 1920

FEBRUARY 1920: US FEDERAL CENSUS UNALASKA

We knew about Benny John Benson and his younger brother Carl Benson being listed in the 1920 US Federal Census at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska, the location where their father shipped the boys in 1916. There was Benson Bennie J., pupil, male, mixed race, age 7, single. There was Benson Carl, pupil, male, mixed race, age 5, single. They were both pupils in the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska. Please see Figure 42 courtesy of NARA (National Archives and Record Administration) and Ancestry.com.

Benson Ben	Head	Male	Mixed	15	1899	1920
" Elsie	Daughter	Female	Mixed	12		
" Bennie	Son	Male	Mixed	5		
" Carl	Son	Male	Mixed	6		

Figure 43 US Census Chignik 1920

JANUARY 1920: US FEDERAL CENSUS CHIGNIK

As mentioned in the abstract, one of our Unanga/Aleut family tree researchers (Carol Larsen Smith) casually mentioned that she found Benny Benson in the 1920 census in Chignik. We did not expect him there because he and his brother were listed in Unalaska. People are not

³⁵ Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska's Flag, India M. Spartz, 2001, Juneau: Alaska State Museums

³⁶ Alaska Statutes 44.12.070. Alaska Flag Day

supposed to be reported twice during any US federal census. But there was the Benson family with the father and three children. We do not know why the father and three children were listed. Maybe the survey happened on a cold day in January 1920, and maybe John Ben Benson wanted to tell the survey taker about his children. Maybe the survey taker enjoyed Benson's stories or the warmth of his home. Technically, since the children were not physically present, the person collecting the information was not supposed to list them. As will be shown below, the name "Bennie" is mis-transcribed as "Bernice." Please see Figure 43 courtesy of www.ancestry.com and the National Archives.

Tongue of Father	Birthplace of Mother	Tongue of Mother	Speaks English	Occupation
Ben Benson	Sweden	Swedish	Yes	Engineer
Elsie Benson	Alaska, Unga	English	Yes	
Bernice Benson	Alaska, Unga	English	Yes	
Carl Benson	Alaska, Unga	English	Yes	

Figure 44 Census Chignik 1920

JANUARY 1920: US FEDERAL CENSUS CHIGNIK: UNGA

However, this information provided us clues about Benny's family tree of which we were previously unaware. This information was the birthplace of the mother: Unga. Unga Village is located in the Shumagin Islands in Unanga territory south of the end of the Alaska Peninsula. Please see Figure 44 courtesy of NARA (National Archives and Record Administration) and www.ancestry.com. Please also see Table 1 below for additional details.

The table below is a simplified version of the 1920 US Federal of the Ben Benson family in Chignik with the 29 columns collapsed into 7 columns to focus on the recently discovered data about the mother's place of birth. Please see Table 1 with information adapted from NARA (National Archives and Record Administration) and Ancestry.com. The "Bernice Benson" is a transcript error and should read "Bennie Benson." The mother's birthplace and tongue have lines or x's through them; this may be shorthand by the census taker to indicate that they were not physically present during the census visit.

Table 1 Benson Family 1920 Census Chignik

Name	Relation	Sex	Race	Age	Marital Status	Mother's Birthplace Tongue
Benson, Ben	Head	M	W	45	Widow	Sweden, Sweden
Benson, Elsie	Daughter	F	Mixed	12	Single	Alaska Unga English
Benson, Bennie	Son	M	Mixed	8	Single	Alaska Unga English
Benson, Carl	Son	M	Mixed	6	Single	Alaska Unga English

Ben Benson	Wid	45	M	1892	1901	1906
Elsie Benson		12	F			
Bernice Benson						
Carl Benson						

Figure 45 US Federal Census Chignik 1920

1920: US FEDERAL CENSUS CHIGNIK, ALASKA

The 1920 US Federal Census in Chignik provided us with information of which we were previously unaware, that Benny's mother might be Unangaĥ. If the children's mother Tatiana was born in Unga, this was inside Unangaĥ territory and sparked an interest among Unangaĥ/Aleut genealogists to do some deeper research into Benny's family tree. This paper is the result of that research. The 1920 US Federal Census also indicated that Ben Benson (the father) was a widowed white male, age 45, emigrated to the United States in 1892, and was naturalized in 1901 (crossed out) and then 1906 written in. The "Bernice Benson" on the form is a misspelling of Bennie Benson. Please see Figure 45 courtesy of www.ancestry.com and National Archives.

2-9/27/18
REGISTRATION CARD 40-35

SERIAL NUMBER	3145	ORDER NUMBER	
1	John Benjamin Benson		
	(First name)	(Middle name)	(Last name)
2	PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS:		
	25-2 1/2 St.	Tacoma	Pierce Wn.
	(No.)	(Street or R. F. D. No.)	(City or town) (County) (State)
3	Age in Years	Date of Birth	
	33	4	Jan. 19, 1885
		(Month.)	(Day) (Year)
RACE			
White		Negro	Oriental
5		6	7
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian			
Citizen		Non-citizen	
8		9	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
U. S. CITIZEN		ALIEN	
Native Born		Naturalized	Citizen by Father's Naturalization Before Registrant's Majority
10		11	12
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		14	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
15 If not a citizen of the U. S., of what nation are you a citizen or subject?			
PRESENT OCCUPATION		EMPLOYER'S NAME	
16 Painter		17 Todd Shipyard	
18 PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS:			
Tillamook		Tacoma Pierce Wn.	
(No.)		(Street or R. F. D. No.) (City or town) (County) (State)	
NEAREST RELATIVE	Name	19 Mr. Brown Benson	
	Address	20 Sanak, Alaska	
(No.)		(Street or R. F. D. No.) (City or town) (County) (State)	
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE			
P. M. G. O. Form No. 1 (Rev. 03-6171)		(Over)	
John Benjamin Benson			

Figure 46 John Benjamin Benson's WWI Registration Form

1918: JOHN BENJAMIN BENSON REGISTERS FOR WWI

On September 12, 1918, in Tacoma, Washington, John Benjamin Benson registered during World War I, described as age 33, born January 19, 1885, White race, Native born, painter for Todd Shipyard, nearest relative Mr. Brown (possibly Bron) Benson, Sanak, Alaska. It is unknown if this person is related to the Benny Benson family, but the geographical location and time frame roughly matches a description of that given by Henry Swanson in *Forgotten Islands*. See Figure 46 courtesy of www.familysearch.org and National Archives.

“That’s right,” I answered, “I will see about it at once.”

I took down my birthday book. Doctor used to say that Miss Winchell gave out birthdays with as much assurance as the Lord, but it is my contention that no child should miss the excitements of a birthday: a cake and a party. Accordingly, whenever a child came with no recorded birthday, I assigned a day to her, and put it down in my book. Mamie was given May fifth.

Figure 47 Home on the Bering Sea, Mary Winchell, p. 159

CIRCA SEPTEMBER 1916: HAVE YOUR BIRTHDAY CAKE

Some orphans arrived at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska without any paperwork that identified their dates of births. Mary Edna Winchell³⁷ (1878 – 1970) worked as a matron at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska and later published *Home on the Bering Sea*³⁸, recording what happened when children arrived without a known date of birth. They wanted the children to have a happy childhood, part of which includes a birthday party with cake. Children without birthdays were given an arbitrary birthday by the matron. Mary Winchell would get down the “birthday book” and write down the child’s birthday. From then on, that was the day that the child celebrated their birthday. This may have occurred with Benny Benson’s date of birth which ended up being thirteen months after his actual date of birth. As demonstrated below, one date was typed, crossed out, and another date handwritten. Please see Figure 47 courtesy of Mary Winchell.

Benson Benjamin		No 217
Born	Chignik Alaska	
Date	1912 Sept. 26 Oct. 12	
Father	John Benj. Benson	Sweden
Mother	Jatana (Sokolovici)	Alaska Dead
Entered	1916 Sept. 29	age 4 Indent. No
Left	1932	(Designated Alaska flag 1927)
Remarks	Living in Kodiak (1953) with two daughters, Anna Mae & Charlotte. Works with Bob Hull airlines.	

Figure 48 Indentured No. 217 courtesy of Jesse Lee Home

SEPTEMBER 29, 1916: BENNY ARRIVES AT JESSE LEE HOME IN UNALASKA

On September 29, 1916, Benny Benson arrived at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska. His

³⁷ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15696177/mary-edna-winchell>

³⁸ Home on the Bering Sea, Mary Winchell, 1951, Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho

information was typed onto a card and recorded as Benson, Benjamin, Number 217. Born Chignik Alaska. Date 1912 ~~Sept. 25~~ Oct 12 [September 25 typed but scratched out with pen and ink]. Father John Benj. Benson ~~Norway~~ Sweden [Norway typed but scratched out and Sweden written in pen and ink]. The word mother is typed and then in handwritten ink, "Tatiana (Schobolein)" followed by "Alaska Dead" typewritten. Entered 1916 Sept. 29 age 4. We now know that Benny's fourth birthday was two weeks before he arrived at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska, but no one in Unalaska might have known this in 1916. With his mother deceased, their family home burned to the ground, and his father incapable or unwilling to attend to the children, it is unknown if there were any birthday celebrations for Benny back in Chignik or on the ship between Chignik and Unalaska. Please see Figure 48 courtesy of the Jesse Lee Home, Ray Hudson, and the Alaska State Museums.

Benson J.B. Ben. Carl.		1921.
June 20	Cash	100. ⁰⁰
Dec. 31.	Due Incid.	63. ⁰⁰
" "	Board.	200. ⁰⁰
	Due to Bal.	163. ⁰⁰
		<hr/>
		263. ⁰⁰ 263. ⁰⁰
Due Dec. 31. 163. ⁰⁰		

Figure 49 Financial Ledger 1921 Jesse Lee Home

SEPTEMBER 29, 1916: INDENTURED #217

On the typed card from the Jesse Lee Home, it was typed Indent. No [indentured number] followed by the date that he left the Jesse Lee Home (1932) and remarks (designed Alaska flag 1927). In the upper righthand corner of the card is typed No. 217. The word "Indent" is an abbreviation for indentured. Benny's age at the time was only four years, and he would continue to be indentured while he remained at the Jesse Lee Home.

Orphanages in rural Alaska in the 1910s and 1920s were not inexpensive to build, operate, and maintain. Education – finding teachers and supplies – was not free. The families of the orphanages provided little – if any – financial support. Some orphanages and public schools saw orphans as indentured, meaning that there were financial debts incurred (room, board, food, tuition) and that the orphans owed something to the orphanages, if nothing else, labor in one form or another. In Unalaska, this labor may have been in the form of helping with the cooking, washing dishes, cleaning the rooms, helping with the farm animals, fishing, or other subsistence activities documented by Jesse Lee Home matron Mary Winchell.³⁹ This occurred not only in Alaska, but

³⁹ Home on the Bering Sea, Mary Winchell, 1951, Caxton Printing, Caldwell, Idaho
 Copyright 2023 Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

across the Nation in the late 1800s and early 1900s in orphanages and boarding schools.⁴⁰

A card from the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska dated 1921 with the names Benson, J.B. For the names Ben and Carl, it was noted that on June 20, there was \$100 of cash. On December 31, there were incidentals due for \$63.00. On December 31 there was also board (possibly room and board) due for \$200. The due to balance was \$263, a sizeable amount in the 1921 for Benny, then age 9, and his younger brother Carl. Benny was indentured to the Jesse Lee Home from 1912, age 4, to 1932, age 20. It is unknown how much debt he accrued after 16 years, if his financial sheet was forgiven, or paid off in labor. Please see Figure 49 courtesy of the Jesse Lee Home, Ray Hudson, and the Alaska State Museums.

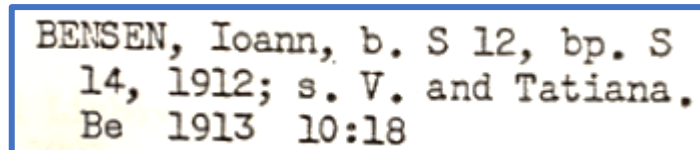


Figure 50 Ioann Benson Birth & Baptism Records

1912: BENNY BENSON'S BIRTH RECORDS AND BAPTISM RECORDS

With assistance from Ms. Nikkita Shellikoff, Cultural Heritage Programs Assistant at Aleutian Pribilof Island Association's Cultural Heritage Department, records we located before the 1920 US federal census related to Benny's birth. Dorosh and Dorosh (1964) reported that church records from September 12, 1912 that Ioann Benson was born and that he was baptized on September 14, 1912. "Ioann" is Russian for John, and the birth date is consistent with John Ben Benson, Junior [although a year earlier than his official State of Alaska birth certificate]. His record includes the initials "s. V." The letter "B" is sometimes mistaken for the letter "V" in Russian and in this case is believed by translators to represent "B" for "Benson." The mother of the newborn boy is listed as Tatiana." The initials "Be" is an abbreviation for Belkofski. This in turn lead us to Benny Benson's original birth records in the Russian Orthodox Church archives and the National Archives. Please see Figure 50; courtesy of John and Elizabeth Dorosh.

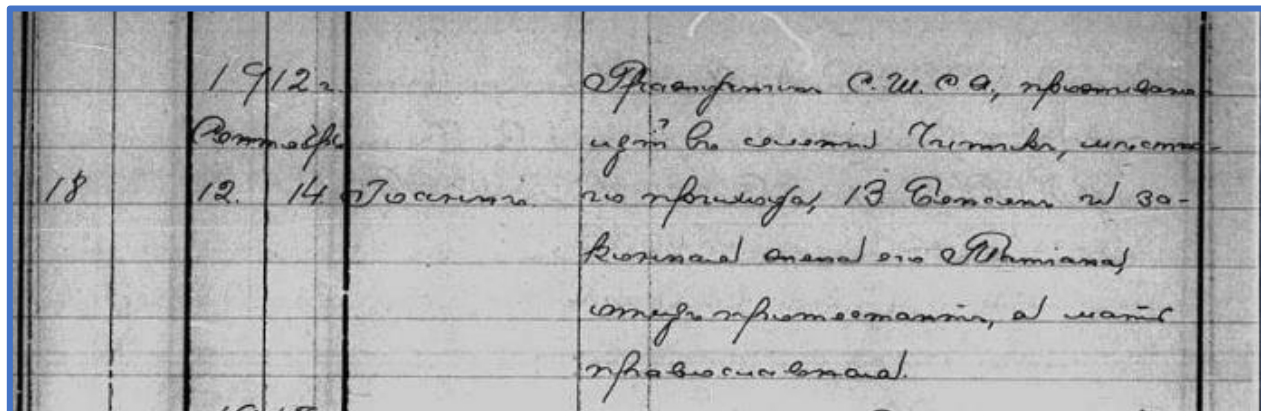


Figure 51 Benny Benson's Birth Records

1913: PARTIAL COPY OF BENNY'S BIRTH RECORDS

A partial copy of Benny Benson's original birth records was located in Russian Orthodox

⁴⁰ Children Indentured by the Wisconsin State Public School, 1925, Washington: Government Printing Office

Church archives filed with FamilySearch.org. They indicated that he was born on September 12, 1912 and baptized September 14, 1912. His birth was recorded on June 1, 1913, about nine months following his birth. These records were located by Stenner Evans who did a preliminary translation. Please note that this date of birth is over a full 13 months earlier than his official birth certificate with the State of Alaska (filed in 1940, some 27 to 28 years after his birth) which reports that Benny was born October 12, 1913. The name of Benny's father is written "B. Benson," and his mother was identified as Tatiana. Please see Figure 51 courtesy of FamilySearch.org. From here we searched for the original and full report with certified translation of Benny's birth and baptism.

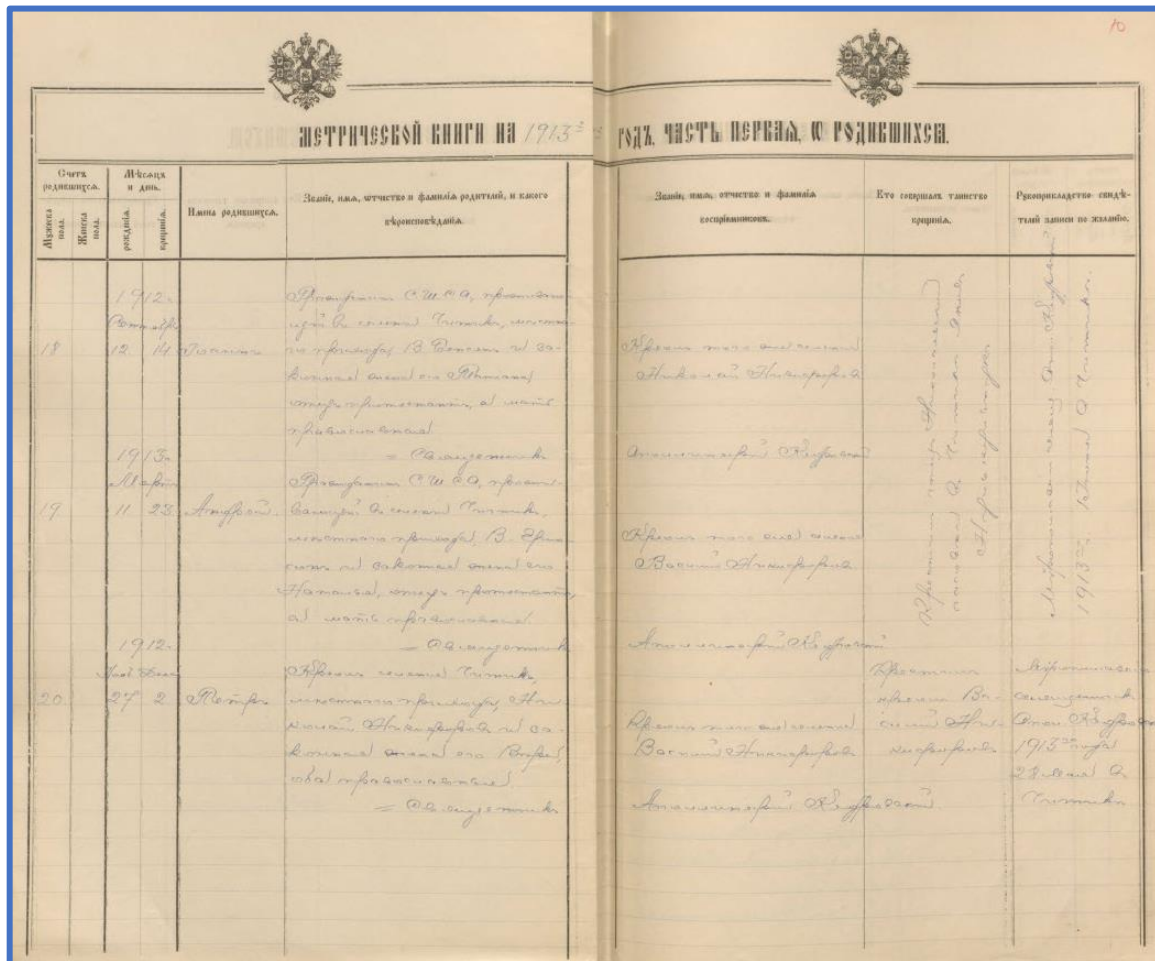


Figure 52 High-resolution scan of Benny's Birth & Baptism Record

1913: BENNY BENSON'S ORIGINAL BIRTH & BAPTISM RECORDS

With guidance from Lotus Norton-Wisla, digital and community outreach archivist, Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation at Washington State University, we reached out to Lara Szypszak, reference librarian, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, who located the original of the Russian Orthodox Church records of Benny Benson's birth and baptism. Lara Szypszak made a high-resolution scan which she then e-mailed to us for examination and translation. Please see Figure 52, courtesy of Library of Congress and National Archives.

Birth Count.		Month and Day.		Birth Names.	Title, Name, Patronymic, and Surname of Parents, and What Religion.	Title, Name, Patronymic, and Surname of Receiver.	Who Performed the Ordinances of Baptism.	Certification by Signature of Recording Witnesses, Optional.
Male	Female	Birth	Baptism					
		1912	September	John*	Citizen of the U.S.N.A., residing in the Village Chignik, of the local parish, V.** Benson, and his legal wife Tatiana; the father is Protestant, and the mother is Orthodox.	Creole of the same village, Nikolai Nikiforov.	Baptized by the Father of the Nikolaevskaya Chapel in Chignik, Yakov Naikyl'nuk.	Anointed Priest Apollinari Kedrovskii, in the year 1913, 1st of June, in Chignik.
18		12	14		= Priest	Apollinari Kedrovskii		
		1913	March	Andrew				
		1912	Nov. Dec.	Peter				

* or, **Ioann**, as an exact transliteration from Russian - Translator.

** **V.** - assuming from **Veniamin** (Russian transliteration) = **Benjamin (Ben)** (English) - Translator.

Figure 53 Translation of Benny Benson's Russian Birth & Baptism Records by RUSA, Inc.

JUNE 1, 1913: TRANSLATION OF BENNY BENSON'S BIRTH RECORDS

With guidance from Russian Orthodox Priest Andrei Tepper, Saint Tikhon Orthodox Church in Anchorage, we located Fyodor Soloviev of RUSA, Inc. who assisted in translations from Russian into English of Benny Benson's birth records from the metric book for 1913, by Priest Kedrovskii on June 1st, 1913, recording that John Benson was born September 12th, 1912 and that he was baptized September 14th, 1912 at the Nikolayevskaya Chapel in Chignik. The format of this translation conformed to the format requested by the State of Alaska's Health Analytics and Vital Records Section (HAVRS). Please see Figure 53 courtesy of the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and RUSA.

BIRTH RECORD	
~ EXTRACT OF THE RECORD No. 18 FROM THE REGISTER OF BIRTHS AND BAPTISM FOR THE YEARS 1912-1913 (page 10) ~	
Name	JOHN
Date of Birth	September 12th, 1912
Date of Baptism	September 14th, 1912
Place of Baptism	Nikolayevskaya Chapel at Village Chignik
Father	V. BENSON
Title	Citizen of the United States of North America
Residing at	Village Chignik
Denomination	Protestant
Mother	TATIANA
Title	Legal Wife
Denomination	Orthodox
Receiver	NIKOLAI NIKIFOROV
Title	Peasant
Residing at	Village Chignik
THIS RECORD WAS MADE BY THE PRIEST APOLLINARY KEDROVSKY IN 1913.	

RUSA

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is a true, full, and accurate Russian-English translation of the document entitled the Birth Record.

Company:	RUSA, Inc.
Address:	9048 Little Brook Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99507
Name of Translator:	Ekaterina Ovsiannikova
Telephone:	(907) 563-9999
Fax:	(907) 522-9433
E-mail:	rusa@gci.net
Website:	www.rusa.us
Completion Date:	October 3rd, 2020

Signature: 

RUSA, INC. CORPORATE SEAL 1994 ALASKA

City of Anchorage, State of Alaska

ON THIS THE **3RD** DAY OF **OCTOBER, 2020**, BEFORE ME, **FYODOR SOLOVIEV**, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED **EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA**, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED. **WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.**

**Notary Public
FYODOR SOLOVIEV
State of Alaska
My Commission No. 181111009
Expires November 11, 2022**



**FYODOR SOLOVIEV
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF ALASKA**

Figure 54 Certified Translation of Benny's Birth Records by RUSA, Inc.

1913: CERTIFIED TRANSLATION OF BENNY'S BIRTH RECORDS

RUSA, Inc. provided a notarized certification of the translation of John Ben Benson, Jr.'s birth records; see Figure 54, courtesy of RUSA, Inc.



Figure 55 Father Kedrovskii at Belkofski

CIRCA 1913: RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PRIEST KEDROVSKII IN BELKOFSKI

Father Apollinari Kedrovskii served as the Russian Orthodox Priest in Unalaska beginning in the 1890s and traveled to several communities up and down the coast including Chignik Bay (Ringsmuth 2007), often expressing concern for the Indigenous people. Author Ray Hudson noted that Kedrovskii was an “experienced, itinerant priest based in Belkofski.”⁴¹ His wife and three children often accompanied him during his travels. He and Father Evfimii Aleksin wrote at least three reports including, “Report to Belkofski, from Chignik Bay, June 10, 1906,” “Report to Belkofski from Chignik Bay, June 9, 1907,” and ““Report to Belkofski, from Chignik Bay, Jan-Dec 1909.”

His writing indicates attention to detail and concern for the well-being of the people in the region in a wide range of topics including influenza pandemics, excessive alcohol consumption, and businesses taking advantage of Alaska Natives. It was Father Apollinari Kedrovskii who traveled to Chignik from Belkofski (approximately 200 nautical miles) to record the birth and baptism of

⁴¹ Minutes from John Ben “Benny” Benson Birth Date Review Panel, March 19, 2021

Benny Benson. Father Kedrovskii recorded Benny's birth and baptism in neat Cyrillic writing, possibly writing the details with a refillable fountain pen.

Father Kedrovskii did not know it, but he was recording an important part of Alaska history that would not be publicly acknowledged on a large scale until almost 110 years later. Please see Figure 55, a photograph of Father Apollinari Kedrovskii standing with his wife and three children in front of the Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church in Belkofski; photograph courtesy of the Alaska State Library, ASL-P243-1-068, Michael Z. Vinokourov Photograph Collection.

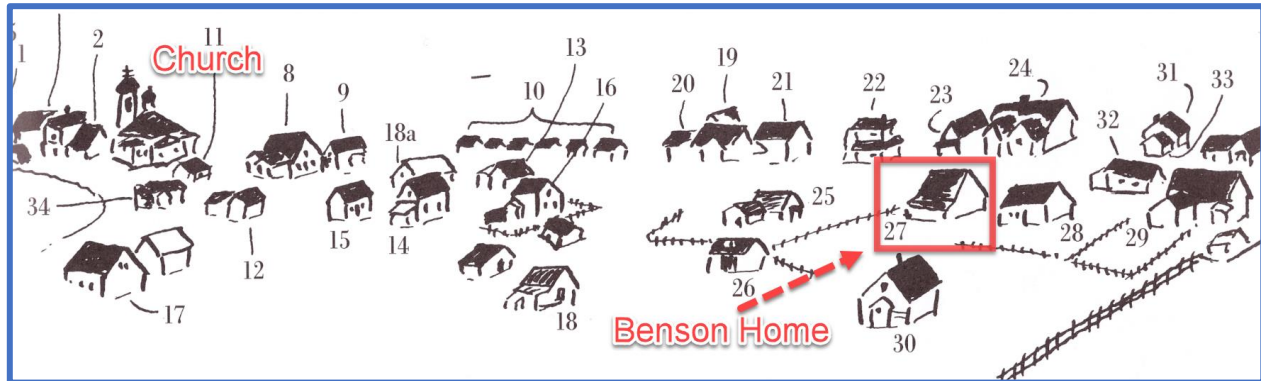


Figure 56 Drawing of Unalaska homes 1900-1912; the Benson home is #27; red type and red symbols added.

1910 TO 1912: BENNY BENSON'S GRANDFATHER'S HOME IN UNALASKA

In our research, we found a map of Unalaska village from 1910 to 1912, showing where Benny Benson's grandfather's home was located. In the winter and spring of 1978, the Unalaska School District published *Cuttlefish Two* (R. Hudson) focusing on four villages abandoned during World War II (Makushin, Biorka, Chernofski, and Kashega) but also containing information about Unalaska. Utilizing a panoramic photograph taken above Unalaska village by Noah Davenport, a paper and pencil drawing was made of the homes, and the homes were numbered. The homes were then identified by Henry Swanson with additional comments sometimes provided by Phil Tutiakoff. Home number 27 was described as, "Benson home. This was the grandfather of the Ben Benson who designed Alaska's flag. He was an old-time sea otter hunter here" (pp. 133-134). In the drawing, you can see the Benson home labeled as #27 and an added red square outline with an added red arrow and added red text. In the drawing, the view is facing northeast over Iliuliuk Bay, and the Russian Orthodox church (Holy Ascension of Our Lord Russian Orthodox Cathedral) can be seen to the left. Please see Figure 56; drawing courtesy of *Cuttlefish Two*.

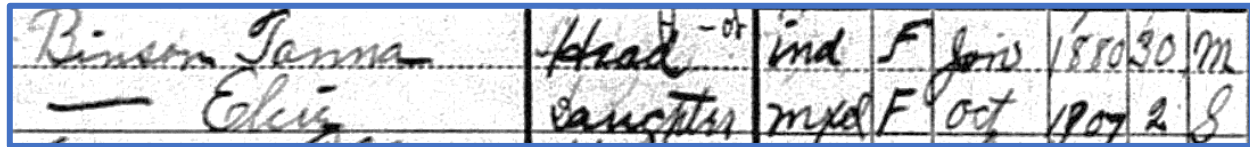


Figure 57 US Federal Census 1910 Sand Point

1910: US FEDERAL CENSUS SAND POINT

As mentioned above, in the 1920 US Federal Census in Chignik, Benny Benson's mother Tatiana was identified as being born in Unga Village. We wondered if she might show up in additional census in Unga, and, in the 1910 US Federal census in the Unga Peninsula Recorder's District, town of Sand Point, we found the following two people whose information is consistent with Tatiana and Elsie Benson, mother and sister to Benny.

1. Binson, Tanna, head of family, Indian, female, born January 1880, age 30, married for three years, one child living, Aleut tribe, born in Alaska, father and mother born in Alaska, occupation at home, cannot read, but can write and speak English.
2. Binson, Elsie, daughter, MXD [mixed race], born October 1907, age 2, single, father white, Aleut mother, born in Alaska, father born in Sweden, mother born in Alaska, occupation at home.

Please see Figure 57, courtesy of NARA (National Archives and Record Administration) and Ancestry.com.

1910: BENNY BENSON'S GRANDFATHER IN SANAK ISLAND

Henry Swanson, a man of Unanga and Swedish descent, has been described as an "important figure in the preservation of Aleutian history from the 20th century, based on his great memory, recorded in numerous interviews. Swanson was a fisherman, fox farmer, and Aleut political activist" (Paulin 2019). Born in Unalaska in 1895, Swanson lived to the age of 95. Speaking about sea otter hunting on Sanak Island south of the end of the Alaska Peninsula, Swanson note, "When they quit sea otter hunting in 1910, there was one Benson. He was the grandfather of this kid that drew the Alaska flag, Benny Benson" (R. L. Hudson 1982, 22). Swanson continued the story, describing how Benny Benson's grandfather was elderly and had to make a living to survive, so he poached sea otters and smuggled the hides to the Lower 48 concealed inside of metal engine blocks.

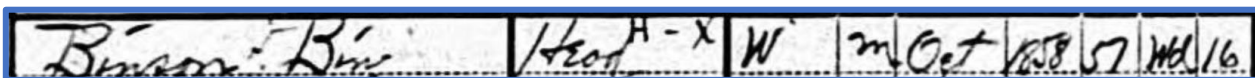
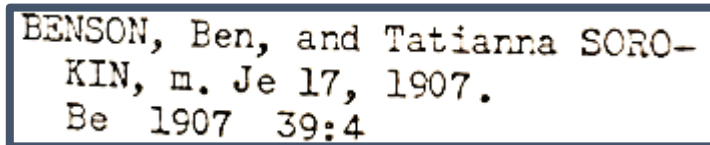


Figure 58 1910 US Federal Census on Sanak

1910: US FEDERAL CENSUS ON SANAK

A search of the 1910 US Federal Census in the Unga Peninsula Recorder's District on Sanak (spelled as Sannaak) on May 6th, 1910 disclosed a "Bin Binson" who was the head of a household in which there was no one else living. He was described as a white male, age 51, born October 1858, widowed, having been married 16 years. He was born in Sweden as were his parents. He immigrated to the United States in 1875, had lived in the United States for 34 years, and he was naturalized. His marital status is "Wd." His occupation has been written over by letters which appear to be 5-9-3-X and may be trapping, farming. It is not known if this Bin Binson is related to John Ben Benson, Sr. or if he is related to Benny Benson. Additional research needs to be conducted. See Figure 58, courtesy of www.familysearch.org and National Archives.



BENSON, Ben, and Tatianna SORO-
KIN, m. Je 17, 1907.
Be 1907 39:4

Figure 59 Ben Benson & Tatiana Sorokin's Marriage Record

JUNE 1907: BENNY'S PARENT'S WEDDING RECORDS

Our family tree research of Benny Benson continued as we tried to locate more information about his mother Tatiana. Records compiled by John and Elizabeth Dorosh titled the *Index to Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths in the Archives of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in Alaska 1900 – 1936 Part 1* (1964) recorded the wedding of Benny's parents. Ben Benson and Tatianna Sorokin were married June 17, 1907. The "Be" refers to Belkofski, an Unanga' village on the south side of the Alaska Peninsula between Unga Village and King Cove. Please see Figure 59; courtesy of John and Elizabeth Dorosh. This information in turn led us to the original documents in the Russian Orthodox Church records. RUSA, Inc. translated the Russian records.

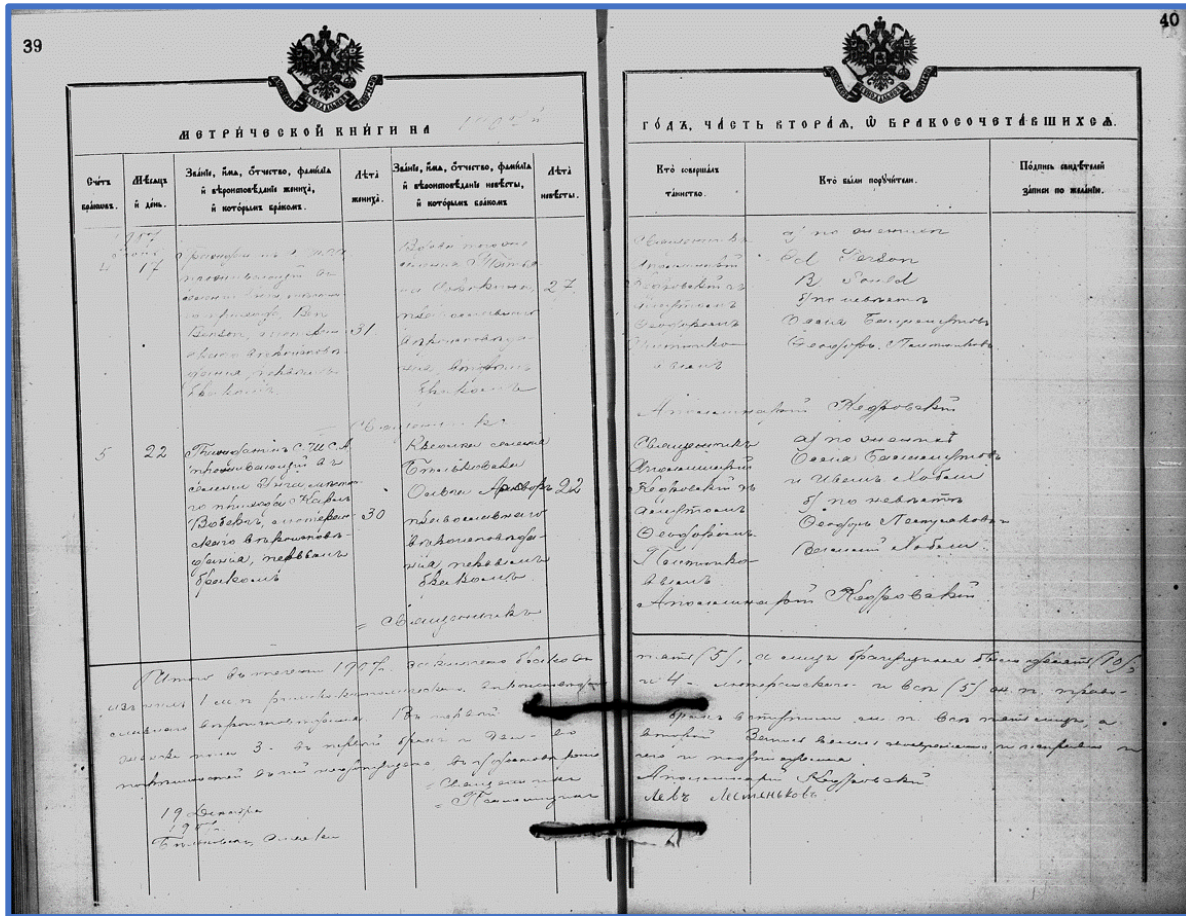


Figure 60 Tatiana and John Benson Sr.'s Wedding Records in Russian

JUNE 1907: BENNY'S PARENTS ORIGINAL WEDDING RECORDS

Benny Benson's parent's wedding records were located in Russian Orthodox Church records retained by National Archives and scanned by www.familysearch.org. Stenner Evans found these records and made a preliminary translation. See Figure 60 courtesy of FamilySearch.org and the National Archives.

<u>MARRIAGE RECORD</u>		
~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE PARISH REGISTER OF MARRIAGES BY RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, UNALASKA (ALASKA), YEAR 1907, PAGES 39-40, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~ (with Russian originals)		
Date of Marriage	June 17th, 1907	ДАТА БРАКОСОЧЕТАНИЯ: 17 ИЮНЯ 1907 Г.
Groom's Name	BEN BENSON	ЖЕНИХ: БЕН БЕНСОН
Age	31	ВОЗРАСТ: 31
Place of Residence:	Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula	СЕЛЕНИЕ УНГА, ОСТРОВ УНГА, ОСТРОВА ШУМАГИНА, ПОЛУОСТРОВ АЛЯСКА
Title	Citizen of the United States of North America	ЗВАНИЕ: ГРАЖДАНИН СОЕДИНЁННЫХ ШТАТОВ СЕВЕРНОЙ АМЕРИКИ
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Denomination	Lutheran	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ЛЮТЕРАНИН
Number of Marriage	1	КОТОРЫМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 1
Bride's Name	TATIANA IOANNOVNA SOROKINA	НЕВЕСТА: ТАТЬЯНА ИОАННОВНА СОРОКИНА
Age	27	ВОЗРАСТ: 27
Place of Residence:	Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula	СЕЛЕНИЕ УНГА, ОСТРОВ УНГА, ОСТРОВА ШУМАГИНА, ПОЛУОСТРОВ АЛЯСКА
Title	Widow	ЗВАНИЕ: ВДОВА
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Number of Marriage	2	КОТОРЫМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 2
Officiant-1	APOLLINARII NIKOLAEVICH KEDROVSKII	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО БРАКА (1):
Title	Priest	АПОЛЛИНАРИЙ НИКОЛАЕВИЧ КЕДРОВСКИЙ, СВЯЩЕННИК
Officiant-2	FEODOR PLETNIKOV	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО БРАКА (2):
Title	Aleut	ФЕОДОР ПЛЕТНИКОВ, АЛЕУТ
Groom's Guarantor-1	EDMOND "ED" LARSEN	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ ЖЕНИХА-1: ЭДМОНД "ЭД" ЛАРСЕН
Groom's Guarantor-2	ROBERT "BOB" GOULD	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ ЖЕНИХА-2: РОБЕРТ "БОБ" ГОУЛД
Bride's Guarantor-1	OSCAR "OSSIA" BALAMUTOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ НЕВЕСТЫ-1: ОСКАР «ОССИЯ» БАЛАМУТОВ
Bride's Guarantor-2	FEODOR PLETNIKOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ НЕВЕСТЫ-2: ФЕОДОР ПЛЕТНИКОВ
Record Was Made and Signed by:		
Priest	APOLLINARII NIKOLAEVICH KEDROVSKII	СВЯЩЕННИК АПОЛЛИНАРИЙ НИКОЛАЕВИЧ КЕДРОВСКИЙ

Figure 61 Translation of John & Tatiana's 1907 Wedding

JUNE 1907: BENNY'S PARENTS WEDDING RECORDS TRANSLATED

In December 2021, we located high resolution scans of John Ben Benson, Sr. and Tatiana's wedding certificate from 1907. We asked for assistance from RUSA, Inc. in translating the document. Their translation indicated that the groom Ben Benson was age 31, his place of residence was Unga Village, his denomination was Lutheran, and this was his first marriage. The bride Tatiana Ioannovna Sorokina was age 27, her place or residence was Unga Village, and her denomination was Orthodox; this was her second marriage. Please see Figure 61 courtesy of RUSA, Inc.



Figure 62 Certified Translation of John & Tatiana's Wedding Records

1907: CERTIFIED TRANSLATION OF JOHN & TATIANA MARRIAGE RECORDS
In January 2022, RUSA provided a notarized certification of the translation of John & Tatiana Benson's marriage records. Please see Figure 62, courtesy of RUSA, Inc.

Счетъ родившихся.		Имена родителей.		Звѣніе, имя, отчество и фамилия родителей, и крестные отцы.	Звѣніе, имя, отчество и фамилия крестныхъ отцовъ.	Кто совершилъ таинство крещения.	Римская цифра и годъ таинства по юліанскому календарю.
муж.	жен.	отца.	матери.				
17		1918	29 5	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	1918 г. 5 мая
13		1918	13 4	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	1918 г. 4 мая
14		1918	14 15 22	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	1918 г. 15 мая
15		1918	15 25 31	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	Иванъ Ивановичъ Ивановъ Марія Ивановна Ивановна	1918 г. 25 мая

Figure 63 Elsa Benson's Birth Records in Russian

OCTOBER 1907: BENNY BENSON'S SISTER'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Benny Benson's older sister was Elsa or Elizabeth Benson. A copy of Benny's sister's birth certificate was located in Russian Orthodox Church records retained by National Archives and scanned by www.familysearch.org. Stenner Evans found these records and made a preliminary translation. See Figure 63 courtesy of www.familysearch.org and National Archives.

BIRTH RECORD

~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE PARISH REGISTER OF BIRTHS AND BAPTISM
BY RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, UNALASKA (ALASKA), YEAR 1907, PAGES 31-32, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~
(with Russian originals)

Name	ELIZABETH "ELSIE" BENSON	ЕЛІЗАВЕТА БЕНСОН
Date of Birth	October 4 th , 1907	ДАТА РОЖДЕНИЯ: 4 ОКТЯБРЯ 1907 Г.
Place of Birth:	Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula	СЕЛЕНИЕ УНГА, ОСТРОВ УНГА, ОСТРОВА ШУМАГИНА, ПОЛУОСТРОВ АЛЯСКА
Father	BEN BENSON	ОТЕЦ: БЕН БЕНСОН
Title	Citizen of the United States of North America	ЗВАНИЕ: ГРАЖДАНИН СОЕДИНЕННЫХ ШТАТОВ СЕВЕРНОЙ АМЕРИКИ
Place of Residence:	Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula	ПРОЖИВАЮЩИЙ: СЕЛЕНИЕ УНГА, ОСТРОВ УНГА, ОСТРОВА ШУМАГИНА, ПОЛУОСТРОВ АЛЯСКА
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Denomination	Protestant	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРОТЕСТАНТ
Mother	TATIANA IOANNOVNA BENSON	МАТЬ: ТАТЬЯНА ИОАННОВНА БЕНСОН
Mother (maiden)	TATIANA IOANNOVNA DEDIUKHINA	МАТЬ (УР.): ТАТЬЯНА ИОАННОВНА ДЕДУХИНА
Title	Legal Wife	ЗВАНИЕ: ЗАКОННАЯ ЖЕНА
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Receiver	MARY LARSEN	ВОСПРИЕМНИК: МАРІЯ ЛАРСЕН
Title	Creole	КРЕОЛКА
Place of Residence:	Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula	ПРОЖИВАЮЩАЯ: СЕЛЕНИЕ УНГА, ОСТРОВ УНГА, ОСТРОВА ШУМАГИНА, ПОЛУОСТРОВ АЛЯСКА
Date of Baptism	October 7 th , 1907	ДАТА КРЕЩЕНИЯ: 7 ОКТЯБРЯ 1907 Г.
Baptist	CONSTANTINE CREEVDEN	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО КРЕЩЕНИЯ: КРЕОЛ КОНСТАНТИН КРИВДЕН
Title	Creole	ПРОЖИВАЮЩИЙ: СЕЛЕНИЕ УНГА, ОСТРОВ УНГА, ОСТРОВА ШУМАГИНА, ПОЛУОСТРОВ АЛЯСКА
Place of Residence:	Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula	ПРОЖИВАЮЩИЙ: СЕЛЕНИЕ УНГА, ОСТРОВ УНГА, ОСТРОВА ШУМАГИНА, ПОЛУОСТРОВ АЛЯСКА
Date of Chrismation	July 13 th , 1908	ДАТА МИРОПОМАЗАНИЯ: 13 ИЮЛЯ 1908 Г.
Presbyter	PRIEST, APOLLINARIИ NIKOLAEVICH KEDROVSKII	КТО МИРОПОМАЗАЛ: СВЯЩЕННИК АПОЛЛИНАРИИ НИКОЛАЕВИЧ КЕДРОВСКИЙ
Place of Chrismation:	Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula	МЕСТО МИРОПОМАЗАНИЯ: СЕЛЕНИЕ УНГА, ОСТРОВ УНГА, ОСТРОВА ШУМАГИНА, АЛЯСКА
Record Was Made and Signed by:		
Priest	APOLLINARIИ NIKOLAEVICH KEDROVSKII	СВЯЩЕННИК АПОЛЛИНАРИИ НИКОЛАЕВИЧ КЕДРОВСКИЙ

- * 1. Parish register of Births and Baptism by Russian Orthodox Church, year 1880, page 10, Unalaska (Alaska). Record of birth of **Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina** on December 29th, 1879. Record in Russian language.
2. Parish register of Marriages by Russian Orthodox Church, year 1907, pages 39-40, Unalaska (Alaska). Record of marriage between citizen of the United States of North America **Ben Benson**, age 31, and widow **Tatiana Ioannovna Sorokina** (maiden name **Dediukhina**), age 27, on June 17th, 1907. Both resided in the **Village Unga**. Record in Russian language.
3. Chignik, Alaska: 1920 U.S. Census (*names of Elizabeth (Elsie) Benson, Ben Benson and others in the family*). <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~coleen/chignik.html>.
4. Unga District: Marriage, Death and U.S. Census Records (*names of Mary Larsen and Constantine Creevden*). <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~coleen/unga.html>.
5. Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America, Diocese of Alaska Records. A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 2011. Prepared by Antoinette Shalkop, Brian McGuire, Vera W. DeBuchananne, and staff members of the Manuscript and European divisions of the Library of Congress. Page 25 (*name of Apollinariі Kedrovskii*). <http://rs5.loc.gov/service/mss/ead/mlms/old/eadpdfmss/2011/ms011165.pdf>.

Figure 64 Translation of Elizabeth Benson's Birth Records

1907: TRANSLATION OF ELIZABETH BENSON'S BIRTH RECORDS

RUSA, Inc. provided a certified translation of Elizabeth Benson's birth records. She was born October 4, 1907 with the place of birth listed as the Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula. The father was Ben Benson, a citizen of the United States of North America with his place of residence described as the Village Unga, Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, Alaska Peninsula and a member of the location parish with his denomination being Protestant. The mother was listed as Tatiana Ioannovna Benson with her mother's maiden name being Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina and her title being legal wife, denomination Orthodox. The receiver, date of baptism, and name of priest are also listed. Please see Figure 64 courtesy of RUSA, Inc.



Figure 65 Certificate of Translation of Elizabeth's Birth Records

1907: CERTIFICATION OF TRANSLATION OF ELIZABETH BENSON'S BIRTH RECORDS
In February 2022, RUSA, Inc. provided a certification of translation of Elizabeth Benson's birth records. Please see Figure 65, courtesy of RUSA, Inc.

112				113		
Менделеевской книге на 1902 год				вместе с пределью обр. упрощенной		
Возраст	Имя	Пол	Место рождения	Отец	Место рождения отца	Место рождения матери
13	Анна	Ж	Селука селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки	Селука селука	Чукотка	Чукотка
14	Анна	Ж	Селука селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки	Селука селука	Чукотка	Чукотка
7	С	Ж	Селука селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки	Селука селука	Чукотка	Чукотка
8	С	Ж	Селука селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки	Селука селука	Чукотка	Чукотка
15	С	Ж	Селука селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки	Селука селука	Чукотка	Чукотка
9	С	Ж	Селука селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки, селука Чукотки	Селука селука	Чукотка	Чукотка

Figure 66 Death Record of Evdokiya Shabolina 1902 Unalaska

1902: DEATH OF TATIANA'S MOTHER EVDOKIYA SHABALINA

In February 2022, Fyodor Soloviev found Tatiana's mother Evdokiya Shabalina's death record number 15. In the parish registry, it says she was the wife of Rafail Shabalin, and she died in the village of Iliuliuk (Unalaska) on July 2, 1902. Please see Figure 66 courtesy of RUSA, Inc., www.familysearch.org, and the National Archives.



Figure 67 Map of Unimak Island in Reference to Triple Homicide and Sanak Island

1901: B. BENSON – TRIPLE HOMICIDE WITNESS

In 1901, there was a triple homicide at Peterson Lagoon on the north side of Unimak Island when unknown person(s) killed three gold mine prospectors from Montana.⁴² A fourth man survived and was eventually picked up by a ship who delivered him to Unalaska. Aleuts of Morzhovoi Village were immediately suspected by men associated with the US Marshal in Unalaska, and a posse of about 40 angry men was assembled. They heavily armed themselves, jumped onto a ship, and silently sneaked up to Morzhovoi Village, searching every barabara (semi-subterranean dwellings), accosting every man, woman, and child, for evidence from the triple homicide.

They found no suspect and no evidence, but one man stepped forth and said the suspect might be at Ikatan Village on nearby Unimak Island. The posse sailed to Ikatan where the suspect Fred Hardy and evidence was located. Fred Hardy was not Unangaĥ and not from Morzhovoi Village. A trial was held in Unalaska, the defendant was convicted and shipped to Nome where the first legal federal execution in Alaska occurred. Most Alaskans executed in the early 1900s were people of color which eventually led to the end of executions in Alaska.⁴³ The man from Morzhovoi Village who identified the location of the suspect was B. Benson. It is unknown if he was related to the John Ben Benson, Sr. family. Morzhovoi Village is located about 50 nautical miles from Sanak Island, and about 200 nautical miles from Unalaska Village. Please see Figure 67; underlying map courtesy of Google Maps.

⁴² <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/177228619/fred-hardy>

⁴³ <https://www.ktoo.org/2017/10/11/racial-disparity-led-ban-death-penalty-territorial-alaska/>

Name	Home Post Office	Relation to Head	Race	Sex	Age	Birth Month	Birth Year	Marital Status		
Elena	x	x	x	Daughter	Mx	f	17	May	1883	sg
Serocon, Peder	x	x	x	Head	Mx	m	31	July	1868	mr
Detiana	x	x	x	Wife	Mx	f	22	Jan.	1878	mr
Pohenkoff, Demitri	x	x	x	Head	In	m	25	Nov.	1874	mr

Figure 68 Benny's Mother Tatiana Sorokin in 1900 US Federal Census

1900: TATIANA SOROKIN AND PETER SOROKIN IN 1900 US FEDERAL CENSUS

Benny's mother Tatiana Sorokin and her husband Peter Sorokin were located in the 1900 US Federal Census in Unalaska (Town).

Peter Sorokin's name was spelled Peder Serocon or Peter Serscon, and his date of birth is listed as July 1868, and he was described as the head of the household, of mixed race, male, age 31. His father and mother were born in Alaska. His occupation was listed as laborer, not being employed six months a year. He could read and write.

Tatiana Sorokin's name was spelled Detiana Serocon, and her date of birth is listed as January 1878. She was described as the wife of the household, of mix race, female, age 22, born January, 1878. Her marital status was listed as married, and her occupation was described as homemaker. She could read and write. Her father and mother were born in Alaska.

They were listed as living in dwelling number 11 and family number 13 with no one else living in the residence. There were a total of 42 dwellings in Unalaska Town in 1900 with 52 families. The census began on June 19th, 1900 and ended on June 22, 1900. There were 186 people listed in the first section of Unalaska Town. Most of the people were mixed (Aleut) with both parents from Alaska, but some parents were from Russia, Germany, England, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Then there were 23 people listed in Veniaminoff Mission School (one Russian male teacher, age 22; and his Russian wife, age 22, followed by 21 pupils). In the second part of Unalaska Town there were 43 people listed. The next section of the census was the Jesse Lee Mission Home with 21 people listed. The census was conducted by Special Agent James G. Blaine who attached a three-page typed memo to the survey, noting that living conditions in Unalaska in the summer of 1900 were challenging due to declines in sea otter hunting. Please see Figure 68, courtesy of the US Federal Census and Ancestry.com.

Peter Sorokin.....	29	M.do	Wife; no children.
Tatiana Sorokin	18	F.do	

Figure 69 Census information collected in Unalaska by Kedrofsky

1897: SEA OTTER BANKS REPORT AND CENSUS

In 1897, A Report on the Sea-Otter Banks (Hooper) was published. Captain Hooper was the commander of the Bering Sea Patrol fleet, and his report covered the range and habits of sea otters, the causes of decrease of sea otters under US rule and the importance of sea otters to Alaska Natives. The report also proposed regulations to prevent the extinction of sea otters, a loss which in turn would adversely affect Alaska Natives. The report also included census records from several Unanga/Aleut villages (Unga, Wosnessenski, Belkofski, Sanaak, Morzhovoi, Old Morzhovoi, Akutan, Unalaska, Biorka, Makushin, Kashega, Chernofski, Unmak, Atka, and Attu) of 1,165 Alaska Native people gathered by Russian Orthodox priest Reverend Alexander Kedrofsky who arrived in Unalaska in 1894. Kedrofsky's census records appear to be neat, organized, and consistent as at each village he recorded name (first and last), age, sex, where born, and remarks such as occupation, marital status, and number of children.

In the Village of Iliuliuk (Unalaska), Kedrofsky recorded census information on over 250 people including Peter Sorokin, age 29, male, born in Unalaska, with a wife and no children. He also recorded Tatiana Sorokin, age 18, female, born in Unalaska.

Tatiana Sorokin is consistent with Benny Benson's mother. For this report, what is significant is that Tatiana is reported to have been born in Iliuliuk Village or Unalaska which is located in Unanga territory. See Figure 69; courtesy of A Report on the Sea-Otter Banks (Hooper).

Менюи скаи Кису на 1896 годъ			Татина Виктория о Свадьбѣ ея		
Свадьба	Свадьба	Свадьба	Свадьба	Свадьба	Свадьба
Свадьба	Свадьба	Свадьба	Свадьба	Свадьба	Свадьба
11	1	Свадьба, имя, фамилия, отчество, гражданство, место рождения, кем и где?	Мать	Свадьба, имя, фамилия, отчество, гражданство, место рождения, кем и где?	Мать
12	1	Свадьба, имя, фамилия, отчество, гражданство, место рождения, кем и где?	Мать	Свадьба, имя, фамилия, отчество, гражданство, место рождения, кем и где?	Мать

Figure 70 Tatiana's First Wedding 1897 written in Russian

APRIL 1896: TATIANA'S FIRST WEDDING RECORDS WRITTEN IN RUSSIAN

Stenner Evans located Tatiana's first wedding records, scanned by www.familysearch.org and retained by the National Archives. Stenner pointed out that Petr had been married before to Serafima Kriukova in 1890 who died in 1895. Petr and Tatiana had a son called Simeon Petrovich Sorokin who was born September 7, 1900 and died October 23, 1900. She was age 16 when she married Petr in April 1896. RUSA, Inc. reviewed these records and confirmed the translation, adding that Simeon Petrovich Sorokin died from the cold. RUSA, Inc. also located Parish records that report that Petr Sorokin and Tatiana had another child, daughter Ekaterina, who was born October 24, 1901, and died next year, February 2, 1902, also from the cold. Please see Figure 70 courtesy of www.familysearch.org and National Archives.

MARRIAGE RECORD		
~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE PARISH REGISTER OF MARRIAGES BY RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, UNALASKA (ALASKA), YEAR 1896, PAGE 50, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~ (with Russian originals)		
Date of Marriage	April 1st, 1896	ДАТА БРАКОСОЧЕТАНИЯ: 1 АПРЕЛЯ 1896 Г.
Groom's Name	PETR SEMIONOVICH SOROKIN	ЖЕНИХ: ПЁТР СЕМЁНОВИЧ СОРОКИН
Age	27	ВОЗРАСТ: 27
Place of Residence:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ
Number of Marriage	2	КОТОРЫМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 2
Bride's Name	TATIANA IOANNOVNA DEDIUKHINA	НЕВЕСТА: ТАТЬЯНА ИОАННОВНА ДЕДУХИНА
Age	16	ВОЗРАСТ: 16
Place of Residence:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛКА
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Number of Marriage	1	КОТОРЫМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 1
Officiant-1	ALEKSANDR NIKOLAEVICH KEDROVSKII	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО БРАКА (1): АЛЕКСАНДР НИКОЛАЕВИЧ КЕДРОВСКИЙ
Title	Priest	СВЯЩЕННИК
Officiant-2	LEONTIY IVANOVICH SIVTISOV	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО БРАКА (2): ЛЕОНТИЙ ИВАНОВИЧ СИВЦОВ
Title	Acolyte	ПСАЛОМШИК
Groom's Guarantor-1	ANFIM VLASOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ ЖЕНИХА-1: АНФИМ ВЛАСОВ
Groom's Guarantor-2	PUD SHAPOSHNIKOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ ЖЕНИХА-2: ПУД ШАПОШНИКОВ
Title	Creoles	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛЫ
Place of Residence:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Bride's Guarantor-1	GERMAN SCHEPENIN	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ НЕВЕСТЫ-1: ГЕРМАН ШЕПЕНИН
Bride's Guarantor-2	FILIPP TATIAKOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ НЕВЕСТЫ -2: ФИЛПП ТАТЬЯКОВ
Title	Creoles	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛЫ
Place of Residence:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Record Was Made and Signed by:		
Dean, Priest	ALEKSANDR NIKOLAEVICH KEDROVSKII	БЛАГОЧИННЫЙ, СВЯЩЕННИК АЛЕКСАНДР НИКОЛАЕВИЧ КЕДРОВСКИЙ
Acolyte	LEONTIY IVANOVICH SIVTISOV	ПСАЛОМШИК: ЛЕОНТИЙ ИВАНОВИЧ СИВЦОВ
* 1. Inventory: The Alaskan Russian Church Archives. Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America--Diocese of Alaska. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Reproduced by Alaska Division of State Libraries and Museums. Pouch G, Juneau, Alaska 99811. Pages 26, 31 (<i>list of names in the alphabetical order</i>). https://library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/docs/asl_%20BX497_A4A47_1984.pdf .		
2. Lost villages of the Eastern Aleutians: Biorka, Kashega, Makushin. Part one: Those Old-Time people. Chapter 1. The Three Villages. Page 1 (<i>about Village Iliuliuk</i>). https://www.nps.gov/aleu/upload/LV-508-Ch-1b.pdf .		

Figure 71 Translation of Tatiana's First Wedding

1897: CERTIFIED TRANSLATION OF TATIANA'S FIRST WEDDING RECORDS
 In January 2022, RUSA, Inc. provided a certified translation of Tatiana's first wedding records from the parish register of marriages by the Russian Orthodox Church. The date of the marriage was April 1, 1896. The groom's name is Petr Semionovich Sorokin, age 27, place of residence Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island, title creole, parish local, denomination orthodox, this being his second marriage.

The bride's name is Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina, age 16, place of residence Village

Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island, title creole, parish local, denomination Orthodox, this being her first marriage. The officiants, groom's and bride's guarantors, dean priest, and acolyte are also listed.

Ray Hudson pointed out that there were two guarantors, possibly because of Tatiana's young age of 16 at the time of the marriage, but it is also curious that the groom needed two guarantors. He also pointed out that the groom's guarantors German Schepenin and Filipp Tatiakov may be German Stepetin (Alfred Stepetin's father; also Agnes Sovoroff's father) and Philip Tutiakoff (Phil's grandfather.) Please see Figure 71 courtesy of RUSA, Inc.

RUSA
Russian American Document Processing Center
State of Alaska, USA
from 1998

Certificate of Russian to English Translation

I, the undersigned, **Ekaterina Ovsianikova**, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is true, full and accurate Russian to English translation of the document entitled **Extract from the Parish Register of Marriages by Russian Orthodox Church, Unalaska (Alaska), year 1896, page 50**, issued in regard of the marriage on **April 1st, 1896** of **Petr Semionovich Sorokin** and **Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina**.

Company: **RUSA, INC.**
Address: **9048 Little Brook Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99507**
Name of interpreter: **Ekaterina Ovsianikova**
Telephone: **(907) 563-9999**
Fax: **(907) 522-9433**
E-mail: **rusa@gci.net**
Website: **www.rusa.us**
Completion date: **January 19th, 2022**

Signature: *Ekaterina Ovsianikova*

RUSA, INC. SEAL
1994
ALASKA

City of Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States

ON THIS THE **19TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2022**, BEFORE ME, **FYODOR SOLOVIEV**, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED **EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA**, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.

Notary Public
FYODOR SOLOVIEV
State of Alaska
My Commission No. 18111009
Expires November 11, 2022

Fyodor Soloviev

FYODOR SOLOVIEV
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF ALASKA

Figure 72 Certificate of Translation of Tatiana's 1896 Wedding Records

1896: CERTIFIED AND NOTARIZED TRANSLATION OF TATIANA'S WEDDING
RUSA, Inc. provided a certified and notarized certificate of Russian to English translation of Tatiana's wedding records from 1896. Please see Figure 72, courtesy of RUSA, Inc.

The image shows two pages of handwritten Russian wedding records. The left page is titled "АВСТРИЙСКОЙ КНИГЕ НА 1887" and the right page is titled "ГЛАВ. ЧАСТЬ ВТОРАЯ, Ш БРАКОСОЧЕТАВШИХСЯ." Both pages feature a coat of arms at the top. The records are for Rafail Shabalain and Evdokiya Dediukhina, dated January 25, 1887. The left page has columns for "Счета казюшек", "Мѣсяцъ и дни", "Знамя, имя, отчество, фамиля и вѣдомое дѣло жениха, и которая вѣдомка", "Мѣсяцъ и дни", "Знамя, имя, отчество, фамиля и вѣдомое дѣло невесты, и которая вѣдомка", and "Мѣсяцъ и дни". The right page has columns for "Кто совершилъ таинство", "Кто былъ поручителемъ", and "Полныя свѣдѣнія о женихѣ и невестѣ".

Figure 73 Rafail Shabalain and Evdokiya Dediukhina's Wedding Records

1887: RAFAIL SHABALIN AND EVDOKIYA DEDIUKHINA'S WEDDING RECORDS

In January 2022, Fyodor Soloviev located the marriage records of Rafail Shabalain and Evdokiya in www.familysearch.org. This greatly assisted in the solving of the mystery of the origin of the last name Shabalain, the purported maiden name of Tatiana Schebolein as reported on Benny's Alaska Territory birth certificate in 1940 in Unga. It was not Tatiana's married name from her first wedding (Sorokin) as some of us postulated. The name Schebolein may have originated from the name Rafail Shabalain, a man to whom Tatiana's mother was married in 1887. Rafail Shabalain became Tatiana's stepfather. RUSA, Inc. located death records of Rafail Shabolain (the "a" in the last name became an "o") died at age 76 years of age on June 6, 1913. Please see Figure 73 courtesy of www.familysearch.org and National Archives.

MARRIAGE RECORD

~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE METRIC BOOK OF DATA FROM THE ALASKA SPIRITUAL BOARD, PARISH OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX UNALASKA ASCENSION CHURCH FOR THE RECORD OF BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS FOR 1887. PART ONE, ABOUT THOSE BORN, PAGE 27, MARRIAGE COUNT RECORD NO. 24, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~
(with Russian originals)

Date of Marriage October 4th, 1887		ДАТА БРАКОСОЧЕТАНИЯ: 4 ОКТЯБРЯ 1887 Г.
Groom's Name	RAFAIL MIKHAILOVICH SHABALIN	ЖЕНИХ: РАФАИЛ МИХАЙЛОВИЧ ШАБАЛИН
Age	50	ВОЗРАСТ: 50
Place of Residence	Village Unalaska, Aleutian Islands	УНАЛАШКИНСКОЕ СЕЛЕНИЕ, АЛЕУТСКИЕ О-ВА
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ
Number of Marriage	2	КОТОРЫМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 2
Bride's Name	EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA DEDIUKHINA	НЕВЕСТА: ЕВДОКИЯ НИКАНДРОВНА ДЕДУХИНА
Bride's Maiden Name	EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA REPINA	НЕВЕСТА (УРОД.): ЕВДОКИЯ НИКАНДРОВНА РЕПИНА
Age	26	ВОЗРАСТ: 26
Place of Residence	Village Unalaska, Aleutian Islands	УНАЛАШКИНСКОЕ СЕЛЕНИЕ, АЛЕУТСКИЕ О-ВА
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛКА
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Number of Marriage	2	КОТОРЫМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 2
Officiant-1	NIKOLAI STEPANOVICH RYSEV	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО (1):
Title	Priest	НИКОЛАЙ СТЕПАНОВИЧ РЫСЕВ, СВЯЩЕННИК
Officiant-2	ANDREI KARPOVICH LODOCHNIKOV	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО (2):
Title	Clerk (Acolyte)	АНДРЕЙ КАРПОВИЧ ЛОДОЧНИКОВ, ПРИЧЕТНИК
Officiant-3	INNOKENTII VASILIEVICH SHISHKIN	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО (3):
Title	Clerk (Acolyte)	ИННОКЕНТИЙ ВАСИЛЬЕВИЧ ШИШКИН, ПРИЧЕТНИК
Guarantor-1	PAVEL REPIN	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ-1: ПАВЕЛ РЕПИН
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Guarantor-2	IVAN DIAKONOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ-2: ИВАН ДЬЯКОНОВ
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Record Was Made and Signed by:		
Priest	NIKOLAI STEPANOVICH RYSEV	СВЯЩЕННИК: НИКОЛАЙ СТЕПАНОВИЧ РЫСЕВ
Clerk (Acolyte)	ANDREI KARPOVICH LODOCHNIKOV	ПРИЧЕТНИК: АНДРЕЙ КАРПОВИЧ ЛОДОЧНИКОВ
Clerk (Acolyte)	INNOKENTII VASILIEVICH SHISHKIN	ПРИЧЕТНИК: ИННОКЕНТИЙ ВАСИЛЬЕВИЧ ШИШКИН

* 1. The Metric book of data from the New Arkhangelsk Spiritual Board, Parish of the Russian Orthodox Unalaska Ascension Church, for the record of births, marriages and deaths for 1861. Pages 9 and 19. Records of birth of **Evdokiya Nikandrovna Repina** on **August 5, 1861** in the **Village Iliuliuk**. *Records in Russian language.*

2. Metrics about births, performed by the sacred church ministers of the Irkutsk Diocese of North-West America, Unalaska Island, Russian Orthodox Ascension Church, for 1838. Record of birth of **Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin** on **November 6, 1838** in the **Village Iliuliuk**. *Record in Russian language.*

3. Inventory: The Alaskan Russian Church Archives. Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America--Diocese of Alaska. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Reproduced by Alaska Division of State Libraries and Museums. Pouch G, Juneau, Alaska 99811. Pages 27, 30, 31 (*Names of Lodochnikov, Rysev, Shishkin*). https://library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/docs/asl_%20BX497_A4A47_1984.pdf.

Figure 74 Translation of Shabalin & Dediukhina's Wedding Records

1887: TRANSLATION OF SHABALIN AND DEDIUKHINA'S WEDDING RECORDS

In February 2022, RUSA, Inc. provided a certified translation of Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin and Evdokiya Nikandrovna Dediukhina's wedding records, date of marriage October 4, 1887. The groom's name was Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin, age 50, place of residence Village Unalaska, Aleutian Islands; title Creole; denomination Orthodox, second wedding. The bride's name was Evdokiya Nikandrovna Dediukhina, and her maiden name was Evdokiya Nikandrovna Repina, age 26 with her place of residence being the Village Unalaska, Aleutian Islands; title Creole; denomination Orthodox, second marriage. Three officiants, two guarantors, a priest, and two clerks are also listed. Please see Figure 74, courtesy of RUSA, Inc.



Russian American Document Processing Center
State of Alaska, USA
from 1990

Certificate of Russian to English Translation

I, the undersigned, **Ekaterina Ovsianikova**, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is true, full and accurate Russian to English translation of the document entitled **Extract from the Parish Register of Marriages by Russian Orthodox Ascension Church, Unalaska (Alaska), year 1887, page 27, record No. 24**, issued in regard of the marriage on **October 4th, 1887** of **Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin and Evdokiya Nikandrovna Dediukhina**.

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E-mail:	rusa@gci.net
Website:	www.rusa.us
Completion date:	February 9th, 2022

Signature: 



City of Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States

ON THIS THE **9TH** DAY OF **FEBRUARY, 2022**, BEFORE ME, **FYODOR SOLOVIEV**, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED **EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA**, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.

		
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Figure 75 Certified Translation of Shabalin & Dediukhina's Wedding Records

1887: TRANSLATION OF SHABALIN AND DEDIUKHINA'S WEDDING RECORDS

In February 2022, RUSA, Inc. provided a certified copy of the translation of Shabalina and Dediukhina's wedding records. Please see Figure 75 courtesy of RUSA, Inc.

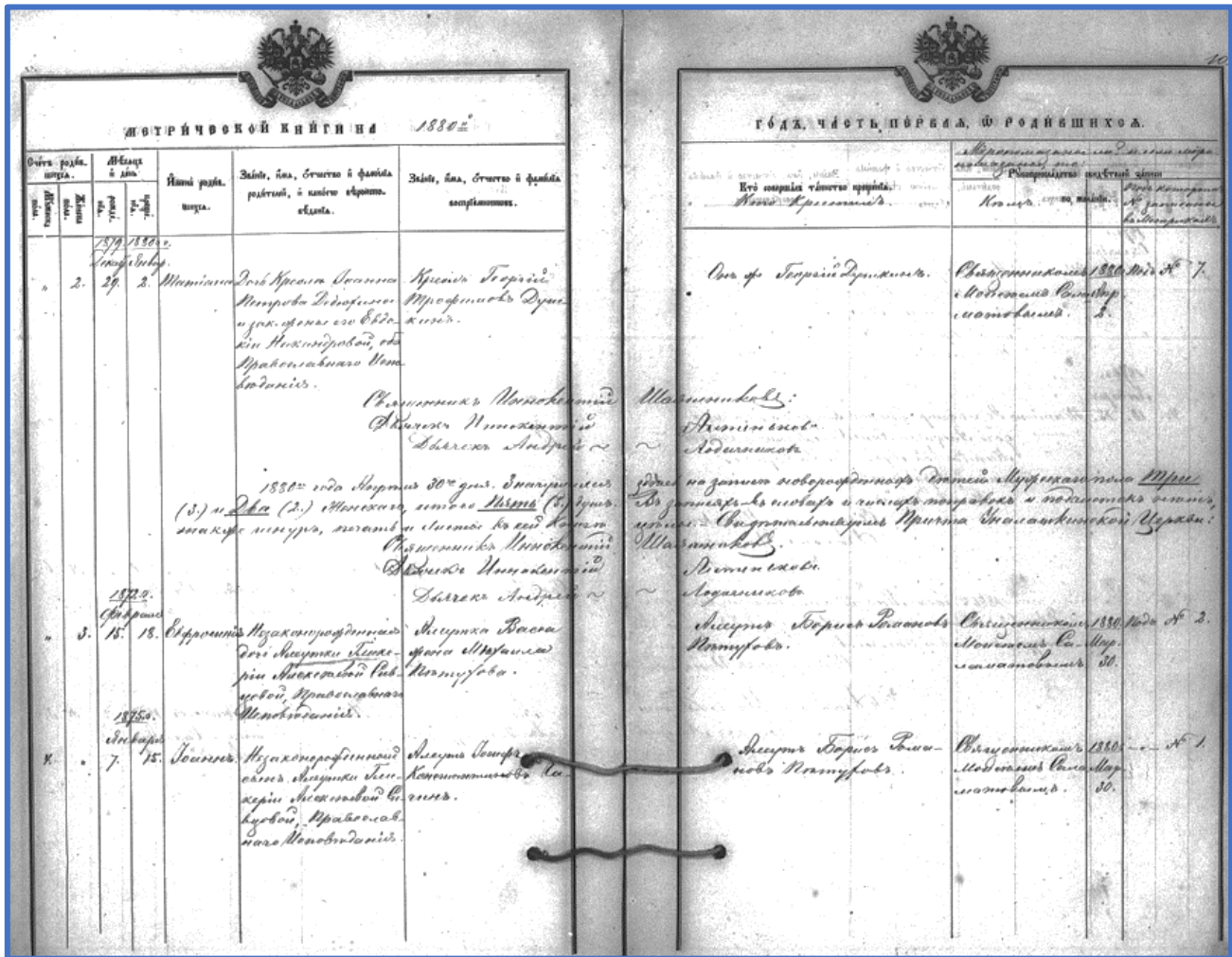


Figure 76 Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina's Birth Records in Russian

1879: BENNY'S MOTHER TATIANA IOANNOVNA DEDIUKHINA'S BIRTH RECORDS

A search was initiated to find Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina's birth records which were located in Russian Orthodox Church archives. Stenner Evans located these records and did preliminary translations. Please see Figure 76 courtesy of www.familysearch.org and the National Archives.

BIRTH RECORD

~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE REGISTER OF BIRTHS AND BAPTISM IN RUSSIAN AMERICA (ALASKA) FOR THE YEAR 1880, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~
(with Russian originals)

Name	TATIANA IOANNOVNA DEDIUKHINA	ТАТЬЯНА ИОАННОВНА ДЕДЮХИНА
Date of Birth	December 29 th , 1879	ДАТА РОЖДЕНИЯ: 29 ДЕКАБРЯ 1879 Г.
Place of Birth:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Father	IOANN PETROVICH DEDIUKHIN	ОТЕЦ: ИОАНН ПЕТРОВИЧ ДЕДЮХИН
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ
Mother	EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA DEDIUKHINA	МАТЬ: ЕВДОКИЯ НИКАНДРОВНА ДЕДЮХИНА
Mother (maiden)	EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA REPINA	МАТЬ (УР.): ЕВДОКИЯ НИКАНДРОВНА РЕПИНА
Title	Legal Wife	ЗВАНИЕ: ЗАКОННАЯ ЖЕНА
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Receiver	GEORGY TROFIMOVICH DUSHKIN	ВОСПРИЕМНИК: ГЕОРГИЙ ТРОФИМОВИЧ ДУШКИН, КРЕОЛ
Date of Baptism	January 2 nd , 1880	ДАТА КРЕЩЕНИЯ: 2 ЯНВАРЯ 1880 Г.
Baptist	GEORGY TROFIMOVICH DUSHKIN	КТО КРЕСТИЛ: ГЕОРГИЙ ТРОФИМОВИЧ ДУШКИН
Date of Chrismation	April 2 nd , 1880	ДАТА МИРОПОМАЗАНИЯ: 2 АПРЕЛЯ 1880 Г.
Presbyter	MOISEI LAVRENTIYEVICH SALAMATOV	КТО МИРОПОМАЗАЛ: СВЯЩЕННИК МОИСЕЙ ЛАВРЕНТЬЕВИЧ САЛАМАТОВ
Date of Record	April 30 th , 1880	ДАТА ЗАПИСИ: 30 АПРЕЛЯ 1880 Г.
Place of Record	RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN UNALASKA	МЕСТО ЗАПИСИ: УНАЛАШКОВСКАЯ ЦЕРКОВЬ
Record Was Made, Confirmed and Signed by:		
Priest	INNOKENTY KASSIANOVICH SHAIASHNIKOV	СВЯЩЕННИК: ИННОКЕНТИЙ КАССЬЯНОВИЧ ШАЯШНИКОВ
Sacristan-1	INNOKENTI MIKHAILOVICH LESTENKOV	ДЬЯЧОК - 1: ИННОКЕНТИЙ МИХАЙЛОВИЧ ЛЕСТЕНЬКОВ
Sacristan-2	ANDREI KARPOVICH LODOCHNIKOV	ДЬЯЧОК - 2: АНДРЕЙ КАРПОВИЧ ЛОДОЧНИКОВ

* 1. Metric book of Births, year 1861. Record on August 1, 1896. Birth of Evdokiya Nikandrovna Repina in the Village Iliuliuk. Record in Russian language.
 2. Metric book of Marriages, year 1896, part 2. Page 50. Record on April 1, 1896. Marriage between creole Petr Simeonovich Sorokin, age 27, and creol Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina, age 16, both resided in the Village Iliuliuk. Record in Russian language.
 3. Inventory: The Alaskan Russian Church Archives. Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America--Diocese of Alaska. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Reproduced by Alaska Division of State Libraries and Museums. Pouch G, Juneau, Alaska 99811. Pages 27, 31. (List of names in the alphabetical order). https://library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/docs/asl_%20BX497_A4A47_1984.pdf.
 4. Lost villages of the Eastern Aleutians: Biorka, Kashega, Makushin. Part one: Those Old-Time people. Chapter 1. The Three Villages. Page 1. (About Village Iliuliuk.) <https://www.nps.gov/aleu/upload/LV-508-Ch-1b.pdf>.
 5. Family online archive of the descendants of Reverend Innokenti Mikhailovich Lestenkov. <https://www.geni.com/people/Reverend-Innokentii-Mikhailov-Lestenkov/6000000027511191069>
 6. Family online archive of the descendants of Reverend Moisei Lavrentievich Salamatov. <https://www.geni.com/people/Reverend-Moisei-Lavrentiev-Salamatov/6000000021583463820>.

Figure 77 Translation of Tatiana's Birth Records

1879: CERTIFIED TRANSLATION OF TATIANA'S BIRTH RECORDS

In January 2022, RUSA, Inc. provided a certified translation of Tatiana's birth records from the register of births and baptisms in Russian America (Alaska) for the year 1880. The name of the child was Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina with a date of birth of December 29, 1879 and the place of birth as the Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island. The father was Ioann Petrovich Dediukhin, title creole, denomination Orthodox. The mother was Evdokiya Nikandrovna Dediukhina with her maiden name being Repina, title legal wife, denomination Orthodox. The receiver, date of baptism, date of Chrismation, presbyter, priest, and sacristans are listed. The place of record is listed as the Russian Orthodox Church in Unalaska. Please see Figure 77, courtesy of RUSA, Inc.



Russian American Document Processing Center
State of Alaska, USA
from 1998

Certificate of Russian to English Translation

I, the undersigned, **Ekaterina Ovsianikova**, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is true, full and accurate Russian to English translation of the document entitled **Extract from the Parish Register of Births and Baptism by Russian Orthodox Church, Unalaska (Alaska), year 1880, page 10**, issued in regard of the birth on **December 29, 1879** of **Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina**, known later as the mother of **John "Benny" Benson**, who was born in the **Village Chignik** on **September 12th, 1912**.

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E-mail: **rusa@gci.net**
Website: **www.rusa.us**
Completion date: **January 19th, 2022**



Signature: 

City of Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States

ON THIS THE **19TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2022**, BEFORE ME, **FYODOR SOLOVIEV**, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED **EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA**, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.





Figure 78 Certificate of Translation of Tatiana's Birth Records

1879: CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION OF TATIANA'S BIRTH RECORDS

In January 2022, RUSA, Inc. provided a certificate of Russian to English translation of Tatiana's birth records. Please see Figure 78; courtesy of RUSA, Inc.

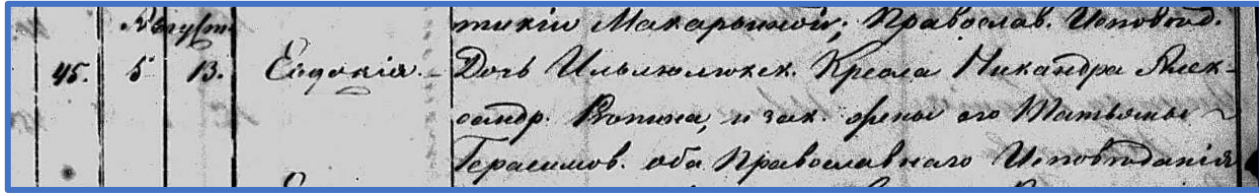


Figure 79 Benny Benson's Maternal Grandmother

1861: BENNY'S MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA
 Stenner Evans located birth records of Benny's maternal grandmother Evdokiya Nikandrovna and did a preliminary translation. Benny's maternal grandmother Evdokiya Nikandrovna's birth records were located in the Unalaska parish of the Russian Orthodox Church archives and note that she was born to Nikandr Aleksandrovich Repin (spelling variation) and Tatiana Gerasimovna (maiden name Ladygina; her mother was Kochutina) on August 5, 1861, and she was christened (baptized) on August 13, 1861. Her birth records mention the name Il'yulyuk [Unalaska]. Please see Figure 79 courtesy of FamilySearch.org and National Archives.

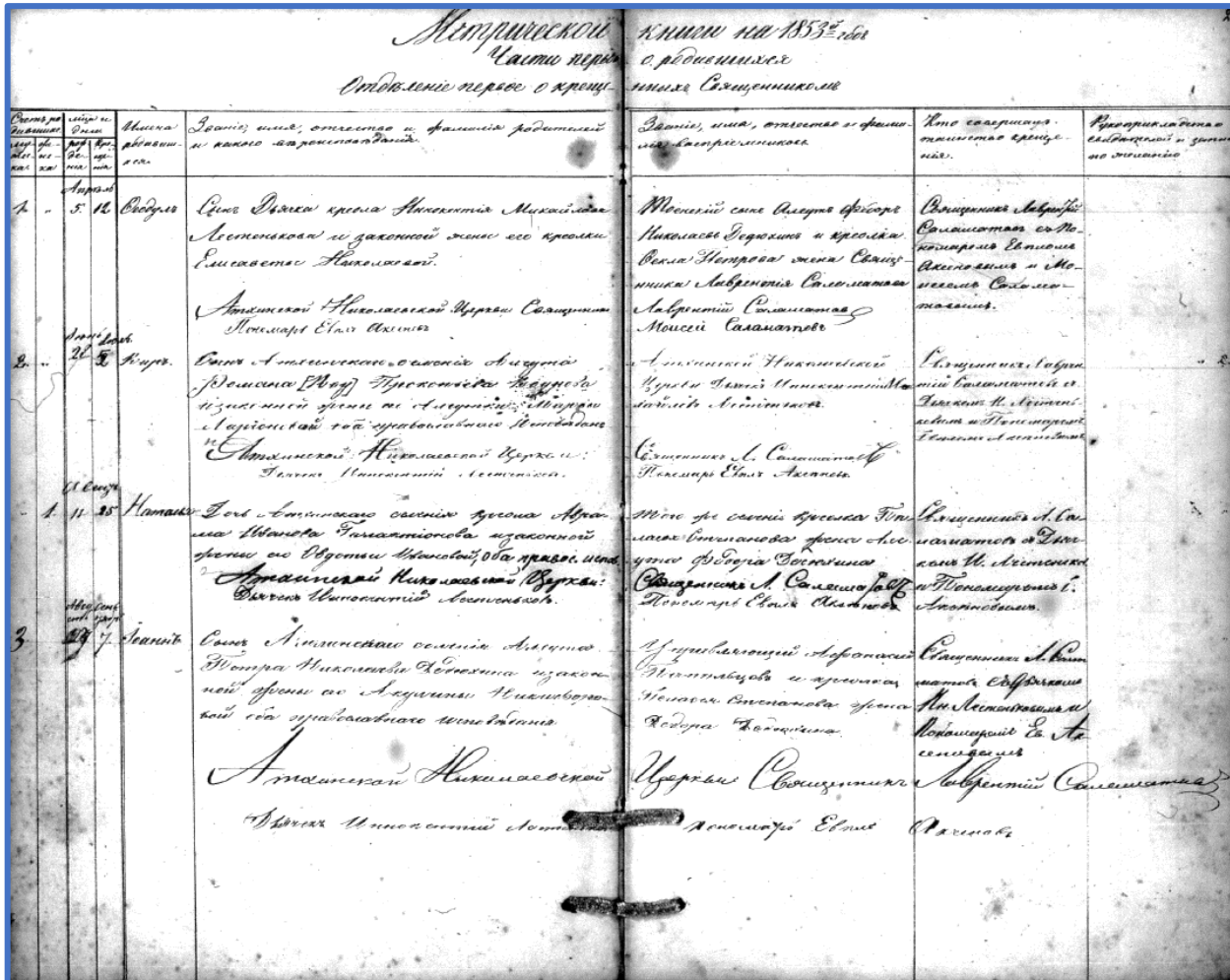


Figure 80 Benny's Maternal Grandfather Ioann Dediukhin's Birth Certificate in Russian

1853: BENNY'S MATERNAL GREAT GRANDFATHER IOANN DEDIUKHIN
 Stenner Evans located birth records of Benny's maternal great grandfather Ioann Dediukhin

and did a preliminary translation. These records are from the Atka parish of the Russian Orthodox Church archives, and they report that the Dediukhins lived on Amlia Island. Amlia Island is southeast of Atka Island in the Andreanof Islands in the Aleutians West Unangaĥ region. The villages on Amlia Island are Unangaĥ. Please see Figure 80, courtesy of www.familysearch.org and National Archives.

<u>BIRTH RECORD</u>		
~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE PARISH REGISTER OF BIRTHS AND BAPTISM BY RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, ATKA PARISH (ALASKA), YEAR 1853, PAGE 2, PART ONE ABOUTH BIRTHS, CHAPTER ONE ABOUT THOSE WHO WERE BAPTIZED BY THE PRIEST; AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~ (with Russian originals)		
Name at Birth	IOANN PETROVICH DEDIUKHIN	ИОАНН ПЕТРОВИЧ ДЕДЮХИН
Date of Birth:	August 27 th , 1853	ДАТА РОЖДЕНИЯ: 27 АВГУСТА 1853 Г.
Place of Birth:	Village Amlinskoye, Island Amlia, Andreanof Islands, Aleutian Islands, Alaska	СЕЛЕНИЕ АМЛИНСКОЕ, ОСТРОВ АМЛИА, АНДРЕЯНОВСКИЕ ОСТРОВА, АЛЕУТСКИЕ ОСТРОВА, АЛЯСКА
Father	PETR NIKOLAYEVICH DEDIUKHIN	ОТЕЦ: ПЁТР НИКОЛАЕВИЧ ДЕДЮХИН
Title:	Aleut	ЗВАНИЕ: АЛЕУТ
Denomination:	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ
Mother	AKULINA NIKIFOROVNA DEDIUKHINA	МАТЬ: АКУЛИНА НИКИФОРОВНА ДЕДЮХИНА
Title:	Legal Wife	ЗВАНИЕ: ЗАКОННАЯ ЖЕНА
Denomination:	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Receiver-1	AFANASHII POMETLTSOV	ВОСПРИЕМНИК - 1: АФАНАШИЙ ПОМЕЛЬЦОВ
Title:	Manager	УПРАВЛЯЮЩИЙ
Receiver-2	PELAGEIA STEPANOVNA, WIFE OF FEDOR NIKOLAYEVICH DEDIUKHIN	ВОСПРИЕМНИК - 2: ПЕЛАГЕЯ СТЕПАНОВНА, ЖЕНА ФЕДОРА НИКОЛАЕВИЧА ДЕДЮХИНА
Title:	Creole	КРЕОЛКА
Date of Baptism:	September 7 th , 1853	ДАТА КРЕЩЕНИЯ: 7 СЕНТЯБРЯ 1853 Г.
Who Performed the Baptism:		КТО СОВЕРШАЛ ТАИНСТВО КРЕЩЕНИЯ:
Priest	LAVRENTII SEMENOVICH SALAMATOV	СВЯЩЕННИК: ЛАВРЕНТИЙ СЕМЕНОВИЧ САЛАМАТОВ
Sacristan	INNOKENTI MIKHAILOVICH LESTENKOV	ДЬЯЧОК: ИННОКЕНТИЙ МИХАЙЛОВИЧ ЛЕСТЕНКОВ
Sexton	EVPL AKSENOV	ПОНОМАРЬ: ЕВПЛ АКСЕНОВ
Place of Record:	ST. NICKOLAS CHURCH, ATKA, ALASKA	МЕСТО ЗАПИСИ: АТКИНСКАЯ НИКОЛАЕВСКАЯ ЦЕРКОВЬ
Record Was Made and Signed by:		
Priest	LAVRENTII SEMENOVICH SALAMATOV	СВЯЩЕННИК: ЛАВРЕНТИЙ СЕМЕНОВИЧ САЛАМАТОВ
Sacristan	INNOKENTI MIKHAILOVICH LESTENKOV	ДЬЯЧОК: ИННОКЕНТИЙ МИХАЙЛОВИЧ ЛЕСТЕНКОВ
Sexton	EVPL AKSENOV	ПОНОМАРЬ: ЕВПЛ АКСЕНОВ
* 1. Parish register of Births and Baptism by Russian Orthodox Church, Atka Parish (Alaska), year 1853, page 2. Names of Fedor Nikolayevich Dediukhin who was a Receiver at the birth on April 5 th , 1853 of Feodul Innokentievich Lestenkov – son of Creole, Sacristan Innokenti Mikhailovich Lestenkov . Record in Russian language.		
2. Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America, Diocese of Alaska Records. A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 2011. Prepared by Antoinette Shalkop, Brian McGuire, Vera W. DeBuchananne, and staff members of the Manuscript and European divisions of the Library of Congress. Pages 21, 23, 26, 30 (names of Evpl Aksenov, Fedor Nikolayevich Dediukhin, Innokenti Mikhailovich Lestenkov, Lavrentii Semenovich Salamatov). http://rs5.loc.gov/service/mss/eadxml/mss.old/eadpdfmss/2011/ms011165.pdf .		

Figure 81 Certified Translation of Ioann Petrovich Dediukhin's Birth Records

1853: TRANSLATION OF IOANN PETROVICH DEDIUKHIN'S BIRTH RECORDS

In January 2022, RUSA, Inc. provided a certified translation of Ioann Petrovich Dediukhin's birth records from the parish register of births and baptisms by Russian Orthodox Church, Atka Parish (Alaska), year 1853. The name at birth was Ioann Petrovich Dediukhin with a date of birth of August 27, 1853 and the place of birth was the Village Amlinskoye, Island Amlia, Andreanof Islands, Aleutian Islands. The name of the father was Petr Nikolayevich Dediukhin, title Aleut, denomination Orthodox. The name of the mother was Akulina Nikoforovna Dediukhina, title legal wife, denomination Orthodox. The document also names receivers, the date of baptism, those who performed the baptism, and the place of record as St. Nickolas Church, Atka, Alaska, naming the priest, sacristan, and sexton. Please see Figure 81 courtesy of RUSA, Inc.



Russian American Document Processing Center
State of Alaska, USA
from 1990

Certificate of Russian to English Translation

I, the undersigned, **Ekaterina Ovsiannikova**, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is true, full and accurate Russian to English translation of the document entitled **Extract from the Parish Register of Births and Baptism by Russian Orthodox Church, Atka Parish (Alaska), year 1853, page 2**, issued in regard of the birth on **August 27th, 1853** of **Ioann Petrovich Dediukhin**, born in the **Village Amlinskoye, Island Amlia, Andreanof Islands, Aleutian Islands, Alaska**.

Company:	RUSA, INC.
Address:	9048 Little Brook Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99507
Name of interpreter:	Ekaterina Ovsiannikova
Telephone:	(907) 563-9999
Fax:	(907) 522-9433
E-mail:	rusa@gci.net
Website:	www.rusa.us
Completion date:	February 6th, 2022

Signature: 



City of Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States

ON THIS THE **6TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2022**, BEFORE ME, **FYODOR SOLOVIEV**, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED **EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA**, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.

Notary Public
FYODOR SOLOVIEV
State of Alaska
My Commission No. 181111009
Expires November 11, 2022





Figure 82 Certified Translation of Ioann Petrovich Dediukhin's Records

1853: CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION OF IOANN P. DEDIUKHIN'S RECORDS

In February 2022, RUSA, Inc. provided a certificate of Russian to English translation of Ioann Petrovich Dediukhin's birth records. Please see Figure 82; courtesy of RUSA, Inc.

I also made public, carrying out the errand given me by His Grace, His Grace's appreciation of the activity of Petr Dediukhin, the toion's son, who is teaching literacy to the Aleut children here, and keeps the local chapel in proper order. This day one of the infants, annointed with myrrh this morning, died, because he was weak; a daughter was born to a local Aleut and named Fekla.

Figure 83 September 21, 1842 from Netsvetov at Atka

1832 & 1842: PETR DEDIUKHIN IN PRIEST IAKOV NETSVETOV'S RECORDS

On a July 1, 1832 tour through the islands of the Atka District, Russian Orthodox priest Iakov Netsvetov noted that "the boy Petr Dediukhin [was] performing the sacristan" at one of the church services (Netsvetov and Black 1980, 78); nine years later, on January 10, 1841, on a trip to Amlia Island, Netsvetov identified the same person as the "the leader, *toin* [chief]" (212). While visiting Atka on September 21, 1842, Netsvetov (Netsvetov and Black 1980, 249) noted that Petr Dediukhin was the chief's son. Please see Figure 83; courtesy of Netsvetov.



Figure 84 Islands of the Four Mountains courtesy of Scott Darsney

BENNY BENSON'S ANCIENT UNANGAĥ ANCESTORS

According to Unangaĥ oral tradition, the Unangaĥ people originated from *Uniiġun* "those out there on the sea" (Bergsland 1994, 615) – the Islands of the Four Mountains, "The old Aleuts believed that [Uniiġun] was where they originated" (Veniaminov 1984, 58 - 59). Netsvetov recorded that the Atkans asserted that the Unangaĥ people originated from Tanag (Tanaĥ) in the Andreanof Islands (Veniaminov 1984, 364). If Unangaĥ originated from Uniiġun or Tanaĥ and if Benny Benson's ancestors were Unangaĥ as we assert and as his maternal family lineage clearly indicates, his ancestors may ultimately have originated from Islands of the Four Mountains or the Andreanof Islands. Please see Figure 84 Islands of the Four Mountains, photograph courtesy of

Scott Darsney.

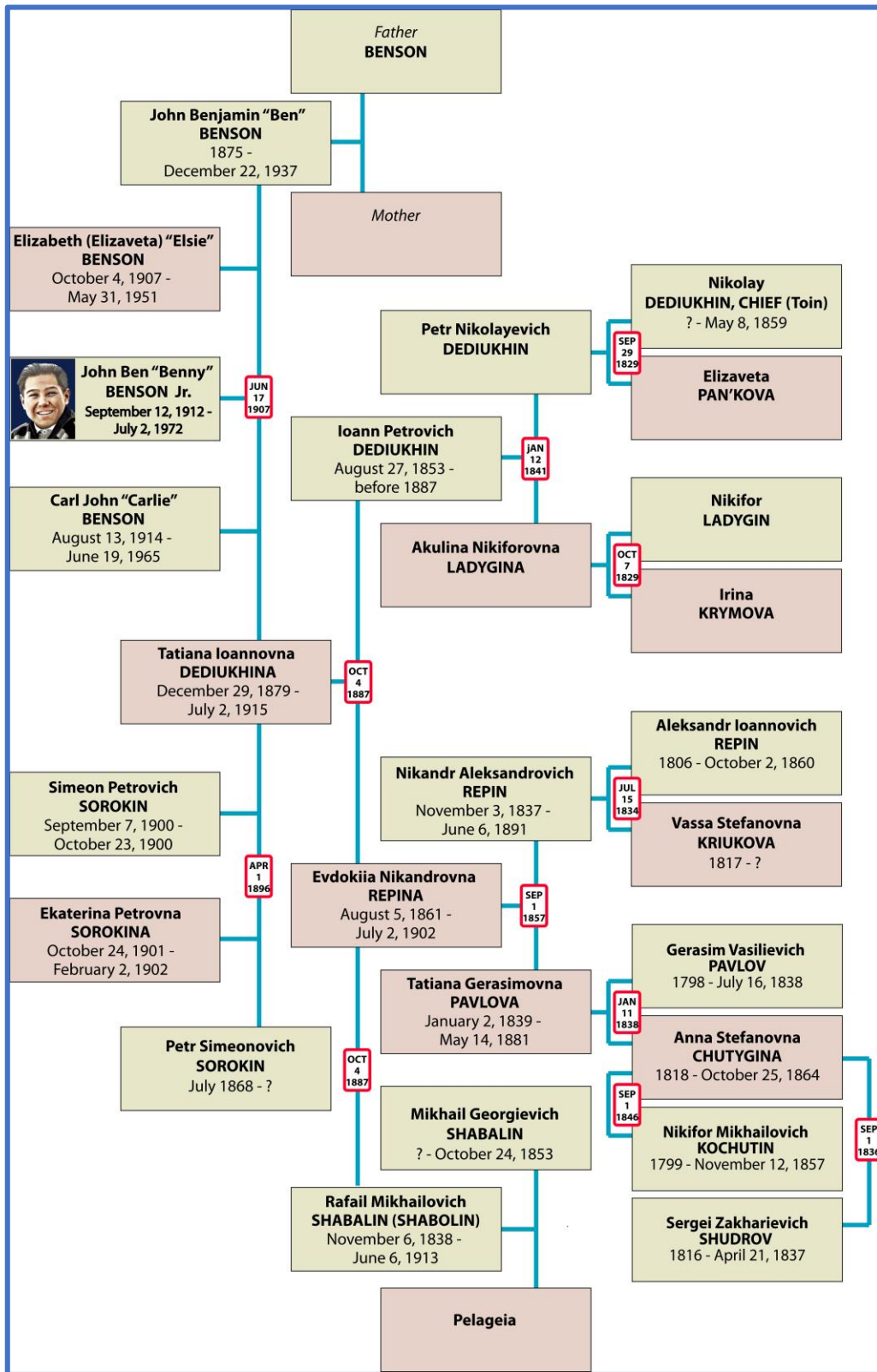


Figure 85 Rough Sketch of Benny Benson's Family Tree

ROUGH SKETCH OF BENNY BENSON'S FAMILY TREE

Utilizing the above-mentioned family tree records as well as additional family-tree research, Fyodor Soloviev created a rough sketch of Benny Benson's family tree showing his parents, his grandparents, and his great-grandparents. Please see Figure 85 courtesy of RUSA.

THINGS WE DID NOT LOCATE

We think it is important for current and future researchers to point out what we did not locate during our research. This is a partial list yet it shows some of what we were unable to uncover.

- Benny's younger brother Carl Benson's birth records.
- The burial site of Benny's mother Tatiana Benson, possibly in one of the Chigniks.
- The burial site of Benny's stepmother Annie Lowell.
- The burial site of Benny's half-brother Alfred Benson, possibly in Seattle.
- The burial sites of Benny's ancestors in Unalaska.
- The burial sites of Benny's ancestors in Amlia or Atka.
- Which Chignik (Lake, Lagoon, or Bay) Benny was born in.
- Benny's father John Ben Benson Sr.'s birthplace in Sweden or Norway.
- Benny's father John Ben Benson Sr.'s name in Swedish or Norway.
- Benny's father John Ben Benson Sr.'s parents and grandparents in Sweden.

There remains many unsolved mysteries in the Benny Benson family tree which may have to be addressed by current or future researchers.

<p>Alaxsxi-x E 1761- (<i>variously written</i>), A 1840, Alaxsi-x Au 1909 <i>n.</i> the mainland, Alaska Peninsula; Ea 1909-10 plain (J 9:10, 25), inland (J 20:4); Alaxsx-a E 1762-1840 mainland (Zap. 2:272), Alaska Peninsula; Nawan-Alaxsxa E 1778- Unalaska Island (<i>see nawa</i>); Sanagiggin</p>	<p>Alaxsxa E 1840 Sanak Island (Zap. 1:245, <i>cf. Sanagax</i>); Alaxsxim Yaga Ea 1910 Kupreanof cape (J 17:24); Alaxsxiin Ea 1910- mainland people, Aleuts of Alaska Peninsula (J 9:75); Alaxsxiin Alгаа E Unimak 1791 (alyaksxin alga) Mainlanders' Mammal, <i>name of tributary man</i>; Alaxsxiin Aliga E Tigalda 1791 (Alyaksxin alega) Mainlanders' Old Man, <i>name of boy</i> (at Krenitzin I. 4); Alaxsxiinulux E Unimak 1791 (alyaksxin ulyuk) Not Mainlanders, <i>name of man</i>; alaxsxi-lix Ep 1983 <i>vi.</i> to go out in the hills or in the tundra to hunt (<i>e.g.</i> to hunt foxes); Alitxuĥ Alaxsxiinaĥ E Unimak 1791 (alitxux alyaksxi-nax) The Warrior(s) Went Inland, <i>name of tributary man</i> (at I 86); <i>cf. Qigalaxsxa</i> under qiga-3. alaxsxiġi-lix E 1909, alixsiġi-I Au 1909 <i>vi.</i> to hunt land animals inland (J 41:2); alaxsxiġi-lix Eu 1984 <i>vt.</i> to go beyond a mountain to look for (aaykaagux fox) in daytime; alaxsxiġim hadan txidix ayuxs A 1909 setting out to hunt on land (J 78:216) + -ġi-, -aġi-</p>
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Figure 86 Definitions of Alaska - The Aleut Dictionary

THE WORD "ALASKA" – AN UNANGAĤ WORD

In the abstract, we mentioned that the word Alaska itself is an Unangaĥ word, and we take this opportunity to share some documentation on this little-known Alaska fact from several sources. During the first documented contact of Europeans with Alaska Natives on September 4, 1741 near Bird Island in the Shumagin Islands south of the end of the Alaska Peninsula, the Europeans called the Alaska Natives (Unangaĥ people possibly from the region of the Unga Tribe or the Qagaan

Tayaġingin Tribe) by the name “Americans” (Steller 1988, 97-98). Some 20 years later, around the 1760s, the word “Alaeksu” was being used (Stewart 1956). Dall (1870) reported that, “When the early Russian traders first reached Unalaska, they were told by natives that to the eastward was a great land or territory... this was called by the natives *Al-ák-shak* or *Al-áy-ek sa*” (pp. 529-530). Veniaminov (Veniaminov 1984) lived in Unalaska from 1824 to 1834, and he noted that the word *Aliaksa* refers to the Alaska Peninsula (p. 440).

In 1944 when the Aleut Language book was published, the author noted, the “Aleut name *Aláxsxaq* refers only to the Alaska Peninsula” (Geoghegan, 87). Ford (2003) reports the word Alaska is “probably an abbreviation of Unalaska, derived from the original Aleut word *agunalaksh*, which means ‘the shores where the sea breaks its back’... the war between water and land is never-ending” (p. 10). Ransom (1940) reported that the word Alaska derives from *Aláxsxaq* (Unalaska) meaning literally, “The object toward which the action of the sea is directed” (pp. 550-551). In the Aleut Dictionary (Bergsland 1994), *Alaxsxiĥ* or *Alaxsxa* is defined as the Alaska Peninsula, the mainland (pp. 49-50; pp. 594-595). Please see Figure 86, courtesy of The Aleut Dictionary.

SALLY SWETZOF (*TUGIDAM AYAGAA*) ON THE WORD “ALASKA”

The theme of the 2019 First Alaskans Institute, Elders & Youth Conference, in Fairbanks was “Language is Our Superpower” (Crouse 2019). Keynote Speaker Sally Swetzof (*Tugidam Ayagaa* in Unangaĥ) said that she was born and raised in Atka, Alaska. Her first language was Unangam tunuu (the Aleut language), and American school officials subjected her and other young students to a form of brainwashing, telling her that, “If I used my Unangam tunuu, I wouldn’t succeed in the modern world. Unfortunately, you know we wanted to succeed so we believed then when we shouldn’t have.” Swetzof said,

So our people are the Unangaĥ... Our language is called Unangam tunuu. The name Alaska comes from Unangam tunuu from the word *Alaxsxaĥ*, and it means Mainland. We are island people, and so when they wanted to talk about the Mainland, they would say *Alaxsxaĥ*. So anytime you hear or say Alaska, remember where it comes from, and you will know that this is how our languages and our superpower. We know we have made this kind of impact on our world. Our languages are a direct connection between us who are here today and all of our ancestors who lived in each our generation before us... This is our homeland. We have been here for the past 10,000 years... we need to be thinking and planning for the next 10,000 years. We want our languages to be here for all those future generations... without our language we lose our culture and our identity... (Swetzof 2020, 00:00 - 29:32).

Thus, the word Alaska itself is Unangaĥ. From our findings of people from other cultures attempting to misappropriate Alaska’s flag designer (Benny Benson) into their culture, it may be anticipated that similar attempts will be made over time with the word Alaska itself.



Figure 87 Map of Benny Benson's Maternal Lineage

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Our search began when a family-tree colleague mentioned finding records indicating that Benny Benson's mother Tatiana was born in Unga Village; we were unable to corroborate this information. However, our findings revealed compelling evidence that Benny Benson's mother, grandparents, and great grandparents were born and raised in Unangaĥ territory. The family tree documents indicate that his mother Tatiana was born in Unalaska, his grandparents were from Unalaska Island in the Fox Islands, and his great grandparents (as well as their parents) were from Amlia Island in the Andreanof Islands. These are located in Unangaĥ territory.

We also found that, over time, the general geographical movement of Benny's maternal ancestors was from the Western Aleutians to the Eastern Aleutians with Benny later moving to Seattle and then Kodiak. We located no evidence of any of Benny Benson's maternal ancestor's having been born in Sugpiat or Alutiiq territory. Please see Figure 87 which displays a map of Benny Benson's maternal lineage with his mother and parents being from the Fox Islands; his grandparents and great grandparents being from the Andreanof Islands; and, his ancient ancestors ultimately originating from Islands of the Four Mountains; underlying map courtesy of Google maps. Next we cover Things Taken from the Unangaĥ People, Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion.

THINGS TAKEN FROM THE UNANGAĥ PEOPLE

In our abstract, we mentioned that many things have been taken from the Unangaĥ people. For those unfamiliar with Unangaĥ history, here is a brief overview. As American archaeologist Dr. Doug Veltre noted, "Of all of Alaska Native peoples, Aleuts have the distinction of experiencing the longest and harshest contact with non-Natives, beginning with the Russian *promyschlenniki*, or fur hunters" (1990, 175). The first Russian explorers arrived in 1741, quickly followed by fur hunters.

The Unangaĥ people have had many things taken over the past three centuries including their name (Veniaminov 1984); the lives of a significant portion of their population during early

Russian extermination campaigns with entire island groups depopulated, even the Islands of the Four Mountains – the sacred place of origin of all Unangaĥ (Veniaminov 1984); their children and wives were kidnapped to force the men to hunt fur mammals (Laughlin 1980); enslavement by the US Federal Government to hunt fur seal from 1867 into the 1980s (Jones 1981); bombing, invasion, and being taken prisoner of war to Japan (Kohloff 1995); forced removal during World War II from their traditional homelands by the US military, a process described as ethnic cleansing (Kohloff 1995); and, detonation of some of the most powerful underground nuclear explosions in the hearts of their beloved islands by the US Atomic Commission in the 1960s and 1970s (Kohloff 2002). Much of this taking was by force (do or be killed) and some involved subterfuge (see, for example, Veniaminov 1984). Many of this long list of atrocities happened only to the Unangaĥ. Most of the published material on a wide range of Unangaĥ intellectual property topics is copyrighted by non-Unangaĥ.

Benny Benson's Unangaĥ heritage was hidden by two separate acts spread over about three centuries, first by Europeans taking away the Unangaĥ name in the 1700s and secondly by people in the late 1900s and early 2000s who assumed that Benny's ethnicity was something other than Unangaĥ. When others claim that Benny Benson belong to their culture (without evidence such as extensive family tree research), Benny and his handsome flag design were thus added to a long list of items misappropriated from the Unangaĥ people over the past 300 years.

Next we cover Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion.

DISCUSSION

When other humans accomplish great things, it appears to be part of human nature to attempt to associate with them, to claim them as our close relatives when – in fact – they may not be. Similarly, when other humans do dastardly deeds, it appears to be part of human nature to disassociate from them, to claim they are not our close relatives, even if they are our siblings, parents, children, spouses, or cousins. Such claims and counterclaims appear to be part of human nature, sometimes perhaps begun in jest and then possibly transforming into claims of fact. Yet sometimes such claims are substantiated or refuted through extensive family tree research or through additional means such as DNA tests, interviews, family heirlooms, photographs, or additional evidence. The authors of this paper assert that John Ben Benson, Jr. is Unangaĥ. We stand by our assertion, and we assert that the documents we uncovered substantiate our assertion. Yet we welcome the opportunity to view new evidence and remain open to new interpretations.

Alaska Native heritage is not determined by where one relocates later in life. If it were, about 50% of Alaska Natives would be Dena'ina because about 50% of the Alaska Native population lives in urban settings such as the Municipality of Anchorage. Anchorage is the fourth largest city in the United States with over 1,700 square miles of land – literally larger than one of the US states (Rhode Island) with plenty of room for 100% of the Alaska Native population. Yet even if 100% of the Alaska Native population relocated to Anchorage, this would not make 100% of the Alaska Native population Dena'ina. In addition, non-Alaska Native people who move into a region would suddenly become assimilated into the tribe of that region.

Furthermore, Alaska Native heritage is not determined solely upon birth location. If it were, a large percentage of Alaska Natives would be reclassified to the ethnicity of the geographical location of the cities (for example, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau) which have the most hospitals where many Alaska births occur. More important than birth location is the ethnicity or tribe of the parents, grandparents, and great grandparents which in turn is based upon the region where these ancestors were born and lived. This was affirmed when the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed by the US Congress in 1971 in which the definition of enrollment of

Alaska Natives included “the region from which an ancestor of the Native came” (Arnold 1976, 303). Alaska Natives who have gone to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to apply for a Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) card are familiar with the form that must be filled out and includes a chart of their family tree from parents to grandparents, and great-grandparents including their tribes which is based on geographical region (BIA 2020).

Because we now know Benny’s actual date of birth (September 12, 1912), we now know how long he lived in Chignik and how long he lived in Unalaska. Benny lived in Chignik about four years before his father shipped him to Unalaska, and then lived in Unalaska about nine years before being shipped to Seward. Thus, nine of his first 13 years (about 69.2%) of the most formative of his years were lived in Unangaĥ territory. Furthermore, as this paper demonstrates, 100% of Benny Benson’s Alaska Native ancestors (his mother, his maternal grandparents, his maternal grandparents, his maternal great-grandparents) were Unangaĥ.

Table 2 Length of Years Benny lived in Chignik & Unalaska

Event	Location	Date	Time Span
Birth	Chignik	9/12/1912	Not Applicable
Lived in Chignik	Chignik	9/12/1912 – 9/29/1916	About 4 Years
Arrive in Unalaska	Chignik to Unalaska	9/29/1916	Not Applicable
Lived in Unalaska	Unalaska	9/29/1916 – 9/25/1925	About 9 Years

While investigating documents for this paper, we found the value of extensive family tree research to address assumptions made about one particular person’s date of birth and ethnic cultural heritage as well as a broader need for careful genealogical research. Finally, we discovered the importance of church records, US federal census records, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and organizations such as Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org who work to preserve, retain, and share archival records. If Russian Orthodox priests such as Father Aleksandr Kedrovskii at churches such as the Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church in Belkofski had not accurately recorded the basic data of when Benny Benson was born and who his parents were, had that data not been preserved and made available, this research paper – as well as the correction of Benny’s date of birth and mother’s maiden name - would not have been possible.

Next we cover Recommendations, and Conclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional family tree research should be conducted in preparation for the 100-year anniversary of the raising of Benny Benson’s flag on Friday, July 9, 2027.

Next, we cover Conclusion.

CONCLUSION: “KNOW WHO YOU ARE”

We began this paper with general traditional Alaska Native values which includes “Know Who You Are – You Are a Reflection on Your Family” (AlaskaNativeKnowledgeNetwork 2019) and specific Unangaĥ values of the Aleutian and Pribilof Island region, “Know your family tree, relations, and people’s history” (ANKN 2019). If you do not know who you are, or if you assume

you are of one tribe but are actually of another, the reflection is off, there is a dissonance.

For example, for most his life, American comedian Fred Armisen (often acting on Saturday Night Live) thought he was ¼ Japanese, but then on the show, “Finding You Roots” with Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Armisen found out he is actually ¼ Korean and not Japanese at all, he exclaimed, “Why didn’t anyone tell me this? This changes ...everything! It changes the way I think about myself... it changes the way I think about the world...” (Gates 2017). Similarly, Arctic people may believe they belong to one tribe when their ancestors actually originate from another.

Family trees form foundations in Alaska Native villages. The need to know your family tree is actually written into Alaska Native values. Genealogical studies have wider implications to Indigenous Studies and Arctic Anthropology because – as this paper demonstrated – sometimes people make assumptions which may not be correct. Even though this paper focused on one individual, it may indicate a wider need for deep family tree research in the Subarctic so that correct information may be transferred from one generation to the next, based upon facts rather than assumptions.

Over 109 years after Benny Benson was born, the State of Alaska corrected his date of birth. Some 80 years after his first Territory of Alaska birth certificate was filed, his mother’s maiden name was corrected. The significance of this correction is that it spotlights the plight of Alaska orphans who sometimes do not know their birthday, their parents, or their cultural heritage. It also spotlights Benny, the designer of the only US State flag designed by an orphan and a Native American, achievements despite personal and family hardships he endured since birth. It spotlights the need for critical thinking, deeper historical research, and a willingness to stand up to point out information which may not be correct. Merely because something is written in history books and repeated for decades in many sources, does not make it accurate. As Unangaĥ leader Anfesia Shapsnikoff exhorted, Alaskans must stand together and speak up to prevent loss.

Finally, this paper spotlights the Unangaĥ people who have had so much taken from them over the past 300 years but who have also given the name Alaska to the 49th State as well as the strong Alaska flag. For Benny Benson, the Big Dipper represented the Ursa Major – the Great Bear – one of the strongest animals in Alaska. Even though Benny Benson may not have known his correct date of birth or his mother’s maiden name, taking the time and energy to correct his birth records is important for his descendants and for future generations because Benny is such a big part of Alaska history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX A

Affidavit for Correction of Date of Birth

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA AT ANCHORAGE

In the Matter of the)	
Correction of Birth Record for:)	
John Ben Benson, Jr.)	CASE NO. 3AN-22- 04638 CI
Date of Birth Incorrect: October 12, 1913)	
Date of Birth Correct: September 12, 1912)	

AFFIDAVIT FOR CORRECTION OF BIRTH RECORD

I, Michael Livingston, the petitioner, request that the Court enter a judgment correcting the birth record of Alaska flag designer John Ben Benson Jr.'s (also known as "Benny Benson") date of birth and mother's maiden name as follows:

- A. Date of Birth from: October 12, 1913 to: September 12, 1912
- B. Mother's Maiden Name from: Tatiana Schebolein to: Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina

Preliminary Matters

- a. Petitioner is a cultural heritage specialist at Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association non-profit organization formed pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) of 1971. APIA's mission statement includes, "To promote, strengthen and ensure the unity of the Unangax people; and, to strengthen and preserve the Unangax cultural heritage."⁴⁴ Petitioner's job responsibilities include researching, publishing, and hosting public ceremonies to honor Alaskans who have served and protected villages.
- b. Traditional Unangax cultural values include knowing your family tree and honoring heroes (for example, warriors killed in the line of action while defending villages from hostile invaders or leaders who bring fame to the community). Knowing your family tree includes knowing who your parents are, knowing when you were born, and knowing the relationships of your relatives and ancestors.⁴⁵ Honoring warriors has been done through traditional celebratory songs, public speeches, dance, body ornamentation, figurines, public art, and full-size wooden carvings.⁴⁶
- c. Petitioner is a captain with the Alaska State Defense Force, a division of the State of Alaska; petitioner's job responsibilities include historical research, publication, and public ceremonies to honor Alaskans who have served in the US military or who have served as positive public role models. John Ben Benson, Jr. served with the United States Armed Forces.
- d. Petitioner has assisted in several similar projects to honor Alaskans including:
 - 1) WWII Private Buddy Bendixen of King Cove⁴⁷,
 - 2) FAA Fire Chief Fred Barnett of Cold Bay⁴⁸,

⁴⁴ <https://www.apiai.org/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.apiai.org/unangax%CC%82-values/>

⁴⁶ Notes on the Islands of the Unalaska District, Ivan Veniaminov, 1984, Fairbanks: University of Alaska

⁴⁷ <https://www.alaskasnewsresource.com/content/news/Alaska-Territorial--485393961.html>

⁴⁸ http://www.thebristolbaytimes.com/article/1634cold_bay_chief_honored_52_years_after_deadly

- 3) WWII Alaska Territorial Guard soldiers Laura Wright, Bob Atwood others⁴⁹,
 - 4) VPSO Ron Zimin of South Naknek⁵⁰ with bronze statues in Anchorage & Sitka⁵¹,
 - 5) Benny Benson – Celebrating Alaska's Superlative Flag Designer⁵², and
 - 6) WWII Private George Fox of Unga and Unalaska⁵³
- e. With other Alaska genealogists, petitioner was researching the cultural heritage of John Ben Benson, Jr. when apparent discrepancies on his birth certificate were inadvertently discovered as outlined below and in attachments.

Reasons for Requesting Correction of John Ben Benson, Jr.'s Birth Record

1. The State of Alaska's official birth certificate currently on file reports John Ben Benson, Jr.'s date of birth as October 12, 1913; and, that his mother's maiden name was Tatiana Schebolein. As substantiated in the attached documents, these are both incorrect. To view the incorrect information, please see Attachment 1, *Certification of Live Birth, first issued in 1940, reissued in 2017, at petitioner's request.*
2. John Ben Benson, Jr. was born September 12, 1912. His mother's maiden name is Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina. The last name Schebolein is from her mother's marriage to Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin on October 4, 1887. These corrections will be substantiated below.
3. On September 16, 1940, the Selective Service Act of 1940 (Pub. L. 76-783)⁵⁴ was enacted, requiring men between the age of 21 and 45 to register, "the nation's first peacetime draft,"⁵⁵ resulting in millions of men registering, some who did not have birth certificates. Even though the United States was neutral in 1940, the Selective Service Act was enacted due to events occurring in Europe and the Pacific Ocean.
4. One month later, on November 16, 1940, John Ben Benson, Jr.'s State of Alaska's birth certificate was filed at the Unga Court in the Territory of Alaska birth certificate filed⁵⁶. See Attachment 2A and 2B, *Standard Certificate of Birth, Territory of Alaska, Registrar's No 000391*, pages 1 and 2, filed 1940.
5. The directions on the birth certificate from 1940 state, "This certificate must be FILLED WITHIN TEN DAYS with the nearest United States Commissioner of the precinct in which the birth occurred, as required by law (capital letters in original document)."
6. John Ben Benson, Jr.'s birth certificate was not filed within 10 days; it was filed more than 28 years after he was born with no supporting documents and during the pre-World War II build up when the national effort focused on rapidly drafting soldiers "to provide for the common defense by increasing the personnel of the armed forces of the United States and providing for its training."⁵⁷
7. In examining the 1940 birth certificate⁵⁸, petitioner found apparent discrepancies (detailed in

⁴⁹ <https://www.alaskanewssource.com/content/news/Alaska-Territorial--485393961.html>

⁵⁰ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/119016292/ronald-eugene-zimin>

⁵¹ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/119016292/ronald-eugene-zimin>

⁵² <http://www.thedutchharborfisherman.com/article/1740celebrating-alaskas-superlative-flag-designer>

⁵³ <https://www.kucb.org/regional/2021-11-11/nearly-80-years-after-his-death-unangax-warrior-pvt-george-fox-to-finally-receive-burial-ceremony>

⁵⁴ <https://uslaw.link/citation/us-law/public/76/783>

⁵⁵ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/2140942/first-peacetime-draft-enacted-just-before-world-war-ii/>

⁵⁶ State of Alaska Certification of Live Birth, State File Number 1913-000391

⁵⁷ Public Law 76/783.

⁵⁸ Standard Certificate of Birth, Registrar's No. 000391, filed November 28, 1940

- the attached 59-page affidavit filed with the State of Alaska on 12/9/2020) including apparently irreconcilable differences (witness attended birth/was not present at birth).
8. Petitioner (with help from other researchers) located Russian Orthodox birth and baptism records⁵⁹ filed on June 1, 1913, reporting that John Ben Benson, Jr. was born September 12, 1912. These birth records were filed less than nine months following Benny's birth. No apparent discrepancies were found in the birth records filed in 1913 by the Russian Orthodox priest. See Attachments 3 A, B, & C.
 9. John Ben Benson, Jr. passed away on July 2, 1972, age 59, and is buried in Kodiak.⁶⁰ His second wife Anna Benson was named as his administratrix⁶¹, but she has since passed away⁶². [NAME DELETED DUE TO PRIVACY CONCERNS] is Anna Benson's [RELATIONSHIP DELETED DUE TO PRIVACY CONCERNS]⁶³ and the closest living relative to John Ben Benson, Jr. that petitioner was able to locate.
 10. Petitioner interviewed John Ben Benson, Jr.'s [NAME DELETED DUE TO PRIVACY CONCERNS] who stated that her [RELATIONSHIP DELETED DUE TO PRIVACY CONCERNS] knew Benny since she was age one and a half; they met at the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska. She said that Benny's State of Alaska birth certificate is incorrect, that Benny was not born in 1913, that he was born in 1912. [NAME DELETED DUE TO PRIVACY CONCERNS] signed and notarized *Affidavit for Correction of Birth Record* and a written statement contained in the attached affidavit. See Attachment 4 as well as written statement in attached affidavit.
 11. With help from others, petitioner located birth records which report that John Ben Benson, Jr.'s mother's maiden name is Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina filed in the village Iliuliuk, Unalaska, Alaska on December 29, 1879. Tatiana Schebolein is her name from her mother's marriage to Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin on October 4, 1887. A certified Russian translator has provided notarized translations of Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina's birth records. See Attachments 5 A, B, & C.
 12. Iluuluġ or Iluulaġ or Iliuliuk is the Unangan/Aleut name for current-day Unalaska, and means, "Going in a Half Circle" or "The Beach that Curves" due to the semi-lunar, half-circle curving shape of the beach in front of the Unangan village.⁶⁴ The indigenous language of the Aleutian Islands is Unangam Tunuu, also known as the Aleut language.⁶⁵
 13. On April 1, 1896, Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina's married Petr Semionovich Sorokin on April 1, 1896 when Tatiana was age 16 and Petr was age 27 in the village of Iliuliuk on Unalaska Island. See Attachment 6 A (Russian 1896), B & C (English, 2021).
 14. Petitioner filed a 59-page affidavit with the State of Alaska who convened a panel of five Alaska history subject matter experts who voted in unanimity on 4/26/2021 to recommend the correction of John Ben Benson, Jr.'s date of birth. Please see Attachment 7, Final Packet returned from Alaska Vital Statistics and the Alaska State Museum.
 15. The State of Alaska's Health Analytics and Vital Records Section issued a letter on 12/21/2021, stating that, under the given circumstances, a court order is required to correct

⁵⁹ Russian Orthodox Church Metric Book for 1913 Year, Part One, About Births

⁶⁰ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/24087330/john-ben-benson>

⁶¹ Civil Action No. 72-6072H

⁶² <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/25535893/anna-sophie-benson>

⁶³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/25535893/anna-sophie-benson>

⁶⁴ Aleut Dictionary, Knut Bergsland, 1994, Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center

⁶⁵ Aleut Dictionary, Knut Bergsland, 1994, Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center

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- John Ben Benson, Jr.'s birth records. Please see Attachment 8.
16. In January 2022, the wedding records of Tatiana's mother from 1887 were located. Tatiana's mother was Evdokiya Dediukhina, and on October 4th, 1887, she married Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin. Please see attachments 9A (Russian), 9B (English), 9C (certified).
 17. Thus, this petition. Please see attached documents, affidavits, and letters.
 18. Petitioner is prepared to testify in court over teleconference, videoconference, or in person concerning this petition.

AFFIDAVIT FOR CORRECTION OF BIRTH RECORD

John Ben Benson, Jr.

Corrected Date of Birth: September 12, 1912

VERIFICATION

I state on oath or affirm that I read this document and believe all statements in it are true.

January 29, 2022
Date

Michael Livingston
Petitioner's Signature

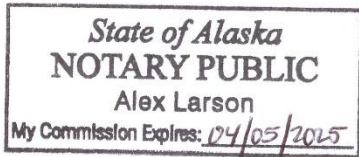
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association 1131 E. International Anchorage, AK 99518
Mailing Address City State ZIP

907-222-4224 or 907-444-8938 mikel@apiai.org
Daytime Phone Email Address

I agree to receive documents from the court at the email address listed above instead of by regular mail

Subscribed and sworn to or affirmed before me at Anchorage, Alaska on 01/29/2022.

(SEAL)



[Signature]
Court clerk, notary public, or other person authorized to administer oaths.
My commission expires 04/05/2025

Attachments

1. State of Alaska, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Certification of Live Birth, File Number 13-000391, 2017
2. Territory of Alaska, Standard Certificate of Birth, Registrar's No. 000391, pages A & B, 1940
3. Russian Orthodox Church Birth Records, John Ben Benson (A, Russian, 1913), (B & C, Russian & English, 2020).
4. Affidavit for Correction of Birth, [NAME DELETED DUE TO PRIVACY CONCERNS], 2020
5. Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina's birth records (A, Russian, 1879), (B & C, English, 2022)

Benny Benson's Hidden Unangax Heritage

6. Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina's marriage records with Petr Semionovich Sorokin (A, Russian, 1896), (B & C, English, 2021)
7. Final Packet from Alaska Vital Statistics 4/26/2021
 - a. Addison E. Field, Chief Curator, Alaska State Museum 4/26/2021
 - b. Minutes from John Ben "Benny" Benson's Birth Date Review Panel 3/19/2021
 - c. Affidavit of Michael Livingston, 59 pages, 12/9/2020
8. Letter from Health Analytics & Vital Records, 12/21/2021
9. Rafail Shabalin & Evdokiya Dediukhina's Wedding Records
 - a. In Russian
 - b. Translated from Russian to English
 - c. Certified Translation from Russian to English

STATE OF ALASKA
CERTIFICATION OF VITAL RECORD

STATE OF ALASKA
Bureau of Vital Statistics
Certification of Live Birth

1913000391

State File Number: 1913-000391

Name: JOHN BEN BENSON JR
Sex: MALE
Date of Birth: 10/12/1913
Place of Birth: CHIGNIK
Mother's Name: TATIANA
Mother's Maiden Name: SCHEBOLEIN
Father's Name: JOHN BEN BENSON
Date Filed: 11/28/1940

Time of Birth: 00:00

000883835

This is a true certification of fact on file in the BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, JUNEAU, ALASKA.

Date Issued: 6/12/2017

Heidi Langdorfer
State Registrar

PRNCSJ (Rev) 11/2009

This copy not valid unless prepared on engraved border displaying the date, seal and signature of the Alaska State Registrar.

ANY ALTERATION OR ERASURE VOIDS THIS CERTIFICATE

000391 **12713**

Registrar's No. _____

STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

Territory of Alaska
Office of
REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS

1. PLACE OF BIRTH
Village or Town Chignik
(If in remote section, give distance and direction from town)

(No. _____ St. _____)

2. FULL NAME OF CHILD John Ben Benson Jr.
(If child is not yet named, make supplemental report as directed.)

3 Sex of Child Male	4 Twin, triplet or other (Answer only in event of plural births)	A N B Number in order of birth	5 Legitimate? Yes	6 Date of birth Oct. 18 1916 (Month) (Day) (Year)
-------------------------------	---	---	-----------------------------	--

7 Full Name John Ben Benson	13 Full Maiden Name Magiana Uchebolein
8 Residence Chignik	14 Residence Chignik
9 Color or Race White	15 Color or Race Russian-Native
Age at last Birthday 33 (Years)	Age at last Birthday Unknown (Years)
10 Birthplace Sweden	16 Birthplace Unalaska
11 Occupation Fisherman	17 Occupation Housewife
12 Number of children born to this mother, including present birth 2	18 Number of children of this mother now living 2

19 CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE (a)

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was alive
(Born alive or stillborn)

full term at Unknown M. on the date above stated.
(State if born at full term)

(a) When there is no attending physician or midwife, then the father, householder, superintendent of institution, captain of vessel or other competent person should make this return. A stillborn child is one that neither breathes nor shows other evidence of life after birth.

(Signature) Mrs. Fred Kroone
Responsible person and close friend.
(Physician or Midwife)

(Address) Unga, Alaska

Give name added from a supplemental report _____, 19____

20 (Below this line is reserved for official purposes)

The above original CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH was filed for record in my office on the 16
day of Nov., 1940, has been duly recorded by me in Book No. 2 Record
of Certificates of Birth at page 179
Unga Precinct, Unga (Town), Division No. 3, Alaska.

Commissioner's No. _____ D.W. Morris U. S. Commissioner.

TERRITORIAL REGISTRAR'S OFFICE
JUNEAU, ALASKA
NOV 28 1940

This CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH RECEIVED _____ Entered in Records of Births
NEIL MOORE
Clerk to Registrar.

WHEN CERTIFICATE IS NOT FILED WITHIN SIX MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF BIRTH THE AFFIDAVIT ON THE BACK SHOULD BE EXECUTED.
(SEE OVER FOR AFFIDAVIT)

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING

WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD

Form 1
N. B.—Every item of information should be carefully supplied. In case of more than one child at a birth, SEPARATE RETURN must be made for each and the number of each in order of birth stated. This certificate must be FILED WITHIN TEN DAYS with the nearest United States Commissioner of the precinct in which the birth occurred, as required by law. The fees for filing and recording this certificate are paid by the Territory.

NOV 28

Benny Benson's Hidden Unangax Heritage

Attachment 2B Territory of Alaska, Standard Certificate of Birth, Registrar's No. 000391, 1940

Affidavit to be executed only when certificate of birth is filed more than six months after the date of birth.

Territory of Alaska
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TERRITORY OF ALASKA } ss.

Full Name of Child: Mrs. Fred W. Krone
Place of Birth: Unagan, Alaska

after being first duly sworn, deposes and states:
knows the facts
That he was present at the time of the birth of John Ben Benson Jr.
which occurred at Chignik, Alaska, on October 12, 1913,
and personally knows the circumstances surrounding the same; that he executed the certificate of birth but that the same was not filed within six months from the date of birth; that the purpose of this affidavit is to secure an official record of the said birth.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this Sixteenth day of November, 1940.

Notary Public for Alaska: D.W. Norris
My commission expires U. S. Commissioner

U.S. Commissioner: [Signature]
Territorial Registrar's Office: [Signature]

WHEN CERTIFICATE IS NOT FILED WITHIN SIX MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF BIRTH THE AFFIDAVIT ON THIS PAGE SHOULD BE EXECUTED.
(SEE OVER FOR AFFIDAVIT)

Benny Benson's Hidden Unangax Heritage

Attachment 3A, Russian Orthodox Church Birth Records, John Ben Benson, in Russian, 1913

Счет родившихся				Имена родившихся		Знаки, имена, отчество и фамилия родителей, и какого епархиальства.			
Месца года	Женца года	Месца года	Имена родившихся	Имена родившихся		Знаки, имена, отчество и фамилия родителей, и какого епархиальства.		Кто скрывал таинство крещения.	Рекорнидацис-секцис-тый листок по крещению.
18	12	14	1912 Ваня	Александр С.И. С.А. Александрович и Мария С.И. С.А. Александровна вспомогательный священник и священник	Александр С.И. С.А. Александрович и Мария С.И. С.А. Александровна	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай
19	11	23	1913 Андрей	Александр С.И. С.А. Александрович и Мария С.И. С.А. Александровна вспомогательный священник и священник	Александр С.И. С.А. Александрович и Мария С.И. С.А. Александровна	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай
20	27	2	1912 Бенедикт	Александр С.И. С.А. Александрович и Мария С.И. С.А. Александровна вспомогательный священник и священник	Александр С.И. С.А. Александрович и Мария С.И. С.А. Александровна	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай	Святой Николай Святой Николай

Benny Benson's Hidden Unangax Heritage

Attachment 3B, Russian Orthodox Church Birth Records, John Ben Benson, in English, 1913 & 2020

Birth Count.		Month and Day.		Birth Names.	Title, Name, Patronymic, and Surname of Parents, and What Religion.	Title, Name, Patronymic, and Surname of Receiver.	Who Performed the Ordinances of Baptism.	Certification by Signature of Recording Witnesses, Optional.
Male	Female	Birth	Baptism					
18		1912 September	12 14	John*	Citizen of the U.S.N.A., residing in the Village Chignik, of the local parish, V.** Benson, and his legal wife Tatiana; the father is Protestant, and the mother is Orthodox. = Priest	Creole of the same village, Nikolai Nikiforov.	Baptized by the Father of the Nikolaevskaya Chapel in Chignik, Yakov Na'ky' nuk.	Anointed Priest Apollinari Kedrovskii, in the year 1913, 1st of June, in Chignik.
19		1913 March	11 23	Andrew	<i>Священник М. С. А. Иванов, Благочинный Чигнигского прихода, православной церкви, в селении Чигниг, в 1913 году, 11 числа, в 11 часов утра, совершил крещение сына Венедикта Ивановича Бенсона, в православную веру, по крещенному имени Андрей.</i>	Apollinari Kedrovskii		
20		1912 Nov. Dec.	27 2	Peter	<i>Священник М. С. А. Иванов, Благочинный Чигнигского прихода, православной церкви, в селении Чигниг, в 1912 году, 27 числа, в 12 часов дня, совершил крещение сына Венедикта Ивановича Бенсона, в православную веру, по крещенному имени Петр.</i>	<i>Священник М. С. А. Иванов, Благочинный Чигнигского прихода, православной церкви, в селении Чигниг, в 1913 году, 23 числа, в 11 часов утра, совершил крещение сына Венедикта Ивановича Бенсона, в православную веру, по крещенному имени Андрей.</i>		

* or, **Ioann**, as an exact transliteration from Russian - Translator.
 ** **V.** - assuming from **Veniamin** (Russian transliteration) = **Benjamin (Ben)** (English) - Translator.

BIRTH RECORD

~ EXTRACT OF THE RECORD No. 18 FROM THE REGISTER OF BIRTHS AND BAPTISM
FOR THE YEARS 1912-1913 (page 10) ~

Name	JOHN
Date of Birth	September 12th, 1912
Date of Baptism	September 14th, 1912
Place of Baptism	Nikolayevskaya Chapel at Village Chignik
Father	V. BENSON
Title	Citizen of the United States of North America
Residing at	Village Chignik
Denomination	Protestant
Mother	TATIANA
Title	Legal Wife
Denomination	Orthodox
Receiver	NIKOLAI NIKIFOROV
Title	Peasant
Residing at	Village Chignik

THIS RECORD WAS MADE
BY THE PRIEST **APOLLINARY KEDROVSKY** IN 1913.



I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is a true, full, and accurate Russian-English translation of the document entitled the Birth Record.

Company:	RUSA, Inc.	
Address:	9048 Little Brook Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99507	
Name of Translator:	Ekaterina Ovsiannikova	
Telephone:	(907) 563-9999	
Fax:	(907) 522-9433	
E-mail:	rusa@gci.net	
Website:	www.rusa.us	
Completion Date:	October 3 rd , 2020	Signature: 

City of Anchorage, State of Alaska

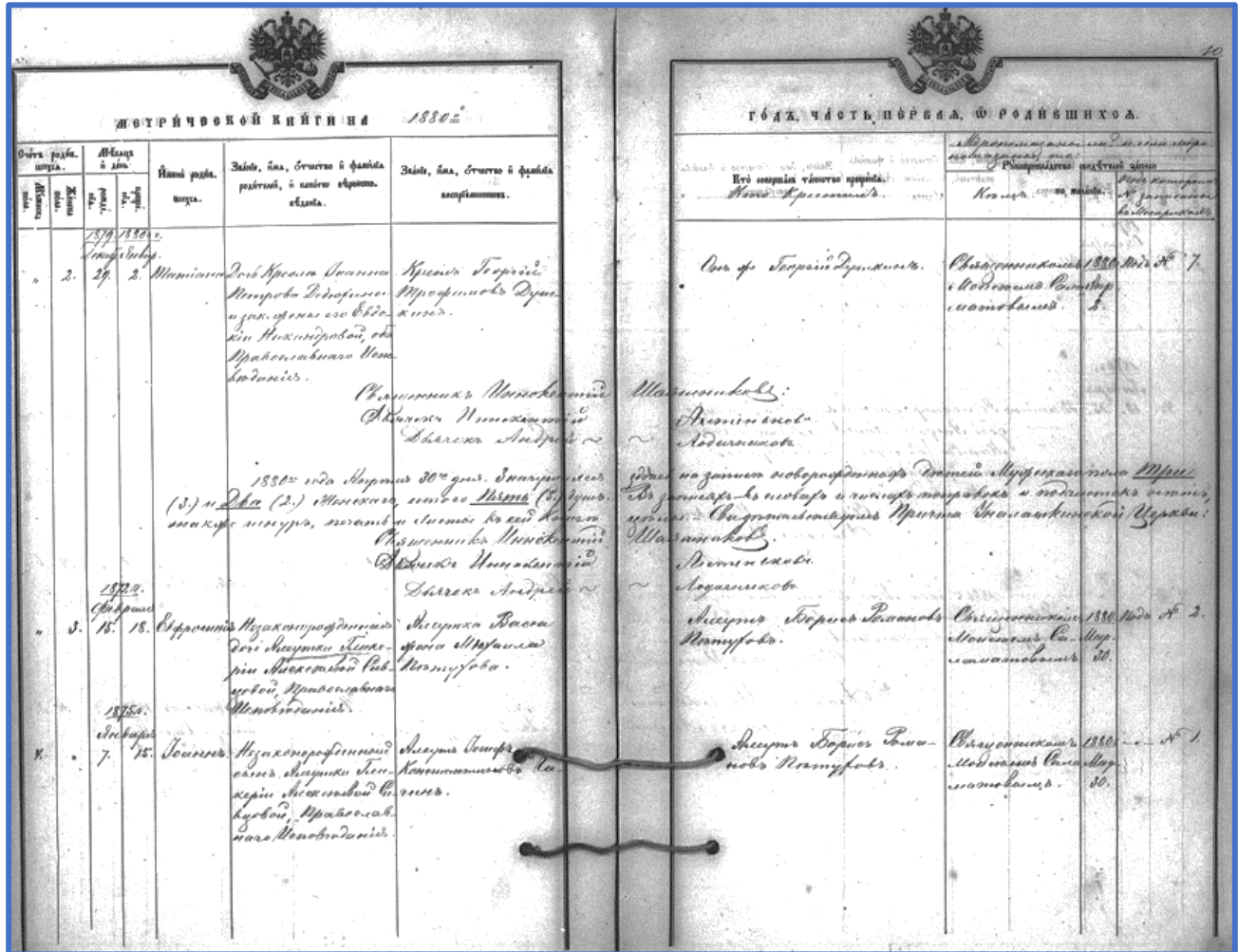
ON THIS THE **3RD DAY OF OCTOBER, 2020**, BEFORE ME, **FYODOR SOLOVIEV**, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED **EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA**, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED. **WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.**







AFFIDAVIT DELETED DUE TO PRIVACY CONCERNS



BIRTH RECORD

~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE PARISH REGISTER OF BIRTHS AND BAPTISM
BY RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, UNALASKA (ALASKA), YEAR 1880, PAGE 10, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~
(with Russian originals)

Name	TATIANA IOANNOVNA DEDIUKHINA	ТАТЬЯНА ИОАННОВНА ДЕДЮХИНА
Date of Birth	December 29 th , 1879	ДАТА РОЖДЕНИЯ: 29 ДЕКАБРЯ 1879 Г.
Place of Birth:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Father	IOANN PETROVICH DEDIUKHIN	ОТЕЦ: ИОАНН ПЕТРОВИЧ ДЕДЮХИН
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ
Mother	EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA DEDIUKHINA	МАТЬ: ЕВДОКИЯ НИКАНДРОВНА ДЕДЮХИНА
Mother (maiden)	EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA REPINA	МАТЬ (УР.): ЕВДОКИЯ НИКАНДРОВНА РЕПИНА
Title	Legal wife	ЗВАНИЕ: ЗАКОННАЯ ЖЕНА
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Receiver	GEORGY TROFIMOVICH DUSHKIN	ВОСПРИЕМНИК: ГЕОРГИЙ ТРОФИМОВИЧ
Title	Creole	ДУШКИН, КРЕОЛ
Date of Baptism	January 2 nd , 1880	ДАТА КРЕЩЕНИЯ: 2 ЯНВАРЯ 1880 Г.
Baptist	GEORGY TROFIMOVICH DUSHKIN	КТО КРЕСТИЛ: ГЕОРГИЙ ТРОФИМОВИЧ
		ДУШКИН
Date of Chrismation	April 2 nd , 1880	ДАТА МИРОПОМАЗАНИЯ: 2 АПРЕЛЯ 1880 Г.
Presbyter	MOISEI LAVRENTIYEVICH SALAMATOV	КТО МИРОПОМАЗАЛ: СВЯЩЕННИК
		МОНСЕЙ ЛАВРЕНТЬЕВИЧ САЛАМАТОВ
Date of Record	April 30 th , 1880	ДАТА ЗАПИСИ: 30 АПРЕЛЯ 1880 Г.
Place of Record	RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN UNALASKA	МЕСТО ЗАПИСИ: УНАЛАШКОВСКАЯ ЦЕРКОВЬ
Record Was Made, Confirmed and Signed by:		
Priest	INNOKENTY KASSIANOVICH SHAIASHNIKOV	СВЯЩЕННИК: ИННОКЕНТИЙ КАССЬЯНОВИЧ
		ШАЯШНИКОВ
Sacristan-1	INNOKENTI MIKHAILOVICH LESTENKOV	ДЬЯЧОК - 1: ИННОКЕНТИЙ МИХАЙЛОВИЧ
		ЛЕСТЕНЬКОВ
Sacristan-2	ANDREI KARPOVICH LODOCHNIKOV	ДЬЯЧОК - 2: АНДРЕЙ КАРПОВИЧ
		ЛОДОЧНИКОВ

- * 1. Parish register of Births and Baptism by Russian Orthodox Church, 1824-1913, Unalaska (Alaska). Record of birth of **Evdokiya Nikandrovna Repina** on **August 5, 1861** in the **Village Iliuliuk**. *Record in Russian language.*
2. Parish register of Marriages by Russian Orthodox Church, 1824-1913, Unalaska (Alaska). Part 2, page 50. Record of marriage between creole **Petr Simeonovich Sorokin**, age 27, and creole **Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina**, age 16, on **April 1, 1896**. Both resided in the **Village Iliuliuk**. *Record in Russian language.*
3. Inventory: The Alaskan Russian Church Archives. Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America--Diocese of Alaska. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Reproduced by Alaska Division of State Libraries and Museums. Pouch G, Juneau, Alaska 99811. Pages 27, 31 (*list of names in the alphabetical order*). https://library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/docs/asl_%20BX497_A4A47_1984.pdf.
4. Lost villages of the Eastern Aleutians: Biorka, Kashaga, Makushin. Part one: Those Old-Time people. Chapter 1. The Three Villages. Page 1 (*about Village Iliuliuk*). <https://www.nps.gov/aleu/upload/LV-508-Ch-1b.pdf>.



Russian American Document Processing Center
State of Alaska, USA
from 1990

Certificate of Russian to English Translation

I, the undersigned, Ekaterina Ovsiannikova, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is true, full and accurate Russian to English translation of the document entitled **Extract from the Parish Register of Births and Baptism by Russian Orthodox Church, Unalaska (Alaska), year 1880, page 10**, issued in regard of the birth on **December 29, 1879** of **Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina**, known later as the mother of **John "Benny" Benson**, who was born in the **Village Chignik** on **September 12th, 1912**.

Company: RUSA, INC.
Address: 9048 Little Brook Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99507
Name of interpreter: Ekaterina Ovsiannikova
Telephone: (907) 563-9999
Fax: (907) 522-9433
E-mail: rusa@gci.net
Website: www.rusa.us
Completion date: January 19th, 2022

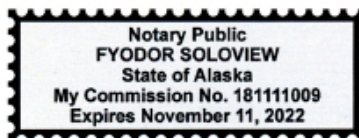
Signature:



City of Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States

ON THIS THE **19TH** DAY OF **JANUARY, 2022**, BEFORE ME, **FYODOR SOLOVIEV**, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED **EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA**, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.



Attachment 6A, Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina's marriage records, in Russian, 1896

Менушкин Кури на 1896 годъ				Городъ Олонецъ - о бракосочетаніи а также сд.				
Свѣдѣніе о брачн.	Мѣсяцъ и годъ	Званіе, имя, фами- лія и отчество а въ гражданствѣ мужа а и фамилія жены?	Мѣсяцъ и годъ	Званіе, имя, фами- лія и отчество а въ гражданствѣ мужа а фамилія жены?	Мѣсяцъ и годъ	Кто свидетели брачн. союза?	Кто или кому свѣдѣтели?	Свѣдѣтели брачн. союза по клятвѣ
11	1	Званіе священн. Алек- сандръ, имя собственн. Алек- сандръ, отчество Алек- сандровичъ, фамилія Алек- сандровъ, - вѣнчанъ въ Олонецѣ - вѣнчанъ въ Олонецѣ.	27	Званіе священн. Ле- онидъ, имя собственн. Леонидъ, отчество Ле- онидовичъ, фамилія Ле- онидовъ, - вѣнчанъ въ Олонецѣ - вѣнчанъ въ Олонецѣ.	16	Свѣдѣтели Александръ Келеръ Сидъ съ женой Леонидъ Сидъ съ женой Келеръ	Поприему въ свѣдѣн. при- сутствіи священн. Алексан- дра, - Александръ, Александръ и Сидъ Шашинниковъ. Поприему по клятвѣ: Званіе священн. Леонидъ, имя собственн. Леонидъ, отчество Леонидовичъ, фамилія Леонидовъ.	
12	1	Званіе священн. Алек- сандръ, имя собственн. Алек- сандръ, отчество Алек- сандровичъ, фамилія Алек- сандровъ, - вѣнчанъ въ Олонецѣ - вѣнчанъ въ Олонецѣ.	27	Званіе священн. Ле- онидъ, имя собственн. Леонидъ, отчество Ле- онидовичъ, фамилія Ле- онидовъ, - вѣнчанъ въ Олонецѣ - вѣнчанъ въ Олонецѣ.	17	Свѣдѣтели Александръ Келеръ Сидъ съ женой Леонидъ Сидъ съ женой Келеръ	Поприему въ свѣдѣн. при- сутствіи священн. Алек- сандра, - Александръ, Александръ и Сидъ Шашинниковъ. Поприему по клятвѣ: Званіе священн. Леонидъ, имя собственн. Леонидъ, отчество Леонидовичъ, фамилія Леонидовъ.	

MARRIAGE RECORD

~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE PARISH REGISTER OF MARRIAGES BY
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, UNALASKA (ALASKA), YEAR 1896, PAGE 50, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~
(with Russian originals)

Date of Marriage	April 1st, 1896	ДАТА БРАКОСОЧЕТАНИЯ: 1 АПРЕЛЯ 1896 Г.
Groom's Name	PETR SEMIONOVICH SOROKIN	ЖЕНИХ: ПЁТР СЕМЁНОВИЧ СОРОКИН
Age	27	ВОЗРАСТ: 27
Place of Residence:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ
Number of Marriage	2	КОТОРЫМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 2
Bride's Name	TATIANA IOANNOVNA DEDIUKHINA	НЕВЕСТА: ТАТЬЯНА ИОАННОВНА ДЕДЮХИНА
Age	16	ВОЗРАСТ: 16
Place of Residence:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛКА
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Number of Marriage	1	КОТОРЫМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 1
Officiant-1	ALEKSANDR NIKOLAEVICH KEDROVSKII	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО БРАКА (1): АЛЕКСАНДР НИКОЛАЕВИЧ КЕДРОВСКИЙ
Title	Priest	СВЯЩЕННИК
Officiant-2	LEONTIY IVANOVICH SIVTISOV	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО БРАКА (2): ЛЕОНТИЙ ИВАНОВИЧ СИВЦОВ
Title	Acolyte	ПСАЛОМЩИК
Groom's Guarantor-1	ANFIM VLASOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ ЖЕНИХА-1: АНФИМ ВЛАСОВ
Groom's Guarantor-2	PUD SHAPOSHNIKOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ ЖЕНИХА-2: ПУД ШАПОШНИКОВ
Title	Creoles	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛЫ
Place of Residence:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Bride's Guarantor-1	GERMAN SCHEPENIN	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ НЕВЕСТЫ-1: ГЕРМАН ШЕПЕНИН
Bride's Guarantor-2	FILIPP TATIAKOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ НЕВЕСТЫ -2: ФИЛИПП ТАТЯКОВ
Title	Creoles	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛЫ
Place of Residence:	Village Iliuliuk, Unalaska Island	СЕЛЕНИЕ ИЛИУЛИУК, ОСТРОВ УНАЛАШКА
Parish	Local	ЦЕРКОВЬ: МЕСТНЫЙ ПРИХОД
Record Was Made and Signed by:		
Dean, Priest	ALEKSANDR NIKOLAEVICH KEDROVSKII	Благочинный, Священник АЛЕКСАНДР НИКОЛАЕВИЧ КЕДРОВСКИЙ
Acolyte	LEONTIY IVANOVICH SIVTISOV	Псаломщик: ЛЕОНТИЙ ИВАНОВИЧ СИВЦОВ

* 1. Inventory: The Alaskan Russian Church Archives. Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America--Diocese of Alaska. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Reproduced by Alaska Division of State Libraries and Museums. Pouch G, Juneau, Alaska 99811. Pages 26, 31 (*list of names in the alphabetical order*). https://library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/docs/asl_%20BX497_A4A47_1984.pdf.

2. Lost villages of the Eastern Aleutians: Biorka, Kashega, Makushin. Part one: Those Old-Time people. Chapter 1. The Three Villages. Page 1 (*about Village Iliuliuk*). <https://www.nps.gov/aleu/upload/LV-508-Ch-1b.pdf>.

Attachment 6C, Certified Translation and Notary of Tatiana's First Marriage



Russian American Document Processing Center
State of Alaska, USA
from 1990

Certificate of Russian to English Translation

I, the undersigned, **Ekaterina Ovsiannikova**, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is true, full and accurate Russian to English translation of the document entitled **Extract from the Parish Register of Marriages by Russian Orthodox Church, Unalaska (Alaska), year 1896, page 50**, issued in regard of the marriage on **April 1st, 1896** of **Petr Semionovich Sorokin** and **Tatiana Ioannovna Dediukhina**.

Company:	RUSA, INC.
Address:	9048 Little Brook Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99507
Name of interpreter:	Ekaterina Ovsiannikova
Telephone:	(907) 563-9999
Fax:	(907) 522-9433
E-mail:	rusa@gci.net
Website:	www.rusa.us
Completion date:	January 19th, 2022

Signature: 



City of Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States

ON THIS THE **19TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2022**, BEFORE ME, **FYODOR SOLOVIEV**, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED **EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA**, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED.


WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.

Notary Public
FYODOR SOLOVIEV
State of Alaska
My Commission No. 18111009
Expires November 11, 2022



Attachment 7, Final Packet from Alaska Vital Statistics, 4/26/2021

Please see attached 62-page document which begins with the following document.



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Department of Education
& Early Development**

DIVISION OF LIBRARY, ARCHIVES & MUSEUMS

P.O. Box 110571
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0571
Main: 907.465.4837
Fax: 907.465.2151

Date: April 26, 2021 4/26/2021

To: Rebecca Topol, Chief of Health Analytics & Vital Records, Division of Public Health

From: Addison E. Field, Chief Curator, Alaska State Museums AEF

Subject: Recommendation Regarding the Birth Date of John Ben "Benny" Benson

1. In October, 2020 I was contacted by Clint Farr, Chief of Health Analytics and Vital Records to review and make a recommendation on a request submitted to the State of Alaska, to officially change the birthdate on record of John Ben "Benny" Benson, Jr.
2. At the request of the State, an *Affidavit for Correction of Birth Record* was submitted by Michael iqyaŋ Livingston, PhD, Cultural Heritage Department, Unanga Heritage Library & Archive, for change of the birthdate of John Ben "Benny" Benson, Jr. from October 12, 1913 to September 12, 1912 Russian Calendar.
3. The Alaska State Museum assembled a committee of subject matter specialists that included the following:
 - a. Dr. Katie Ringsmuth, Alaska State Historian and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, UAA instructor of history.
 - b. Ray Hudson, '64 to '92 taught at Unalaska Public School, author of *Family After All: Alaska's Jesse Lee Home, Unalaska, 1889-1925*.
 - c. Dr. Rachel Mason, Senior Cultural Anthropologist for Alaska Region of NPS, Program Manager for Aleutian Islands WWII National Historic Area.
 - d. Jackie Pels, from Unga, experience as a legal clerk and author/ editor of *Family After All: Alaska's Jesse Lee Home, Volume II, Seward 1925-1965*.
 - e. Dr. Thomas Michael Swensen, from Kodiak, grew up next to Benny Benson, Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies at University of Utah .
4. The committee convened on March 19, 2021 via teleconference to review the affidavit and discuss the historical information at hand. In discussion the committee felt that the preponderance of evidence available at the time supports this request. The committee voted, in unanimity, to recommend change to the birthdate of John Ben "Benny" Benson Jr., to September 12, 1912 Russian Calendar.



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL I. DUNLEAVY

Department of
Health and Social Services
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Health Analytics & Vital Records
P.O. Box 110675
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0675
Main: 907.465.3391
Fax: 907.465.361

Dr. Michael Livingston
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc.
1131 East International Airport Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99518-1408

December 21, 2021

NAME ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE: JOHN BEN BENSON, JR.

Dr. Livingston,

Thank you for submitting your application to amend the date of birth on the record named above.



After reviewing your case, our law department advised that HAVRS stay within the standard precedent procedures. Currently, we require a court order to amend a vital record if the applicant is not the person themselves or a direct family member. It is imperative for HAVRS to keep all vital records data safe and following the guidelines for amending records is a layer of protection for Alaskans.

I am returning all your original documents with this letter. Please contact your local courthouse and submit a certified copy of the court order along with the birth certificate request form, copy of your ID, and payment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Special Services Unit
BVSSpecialServices@alaska.gov
907-465-1200

 МЕТРИЧЕСКОЙ КНИЖИ НА 1887						 ГОДА, ЧАСТЬ ВТОРАЯ, ШЕ БРАКОСОЧТАВШИХСЯ.		
Выгн леташек.	Мѣсяцъ и день.	Званіе, имя, отчество, фамиліа и вършася дѣлн женицъ, и которыя браковъ.	Лѣта женицъ.	Званіе, имя, отчество, фамиліа и вършася дѣлн невесты, и которыя браковъ.	Лѣта невесты.	Кто совершилъ таинство.	Кто былъ поручителн.	Подпись священника зділн по жданію.
28	25	Мужчина Александръ Александровичъ сынъ Александръ Александровичъ Павловичъ, православнаго сана благочиннаго, перваго браковъ.	36	Женщина Евдокія Евдокіевна дочь Евдокія Евдокіевича, православнаго сана перваго браковъ.	25	Священникъ Александръ Александровичъ	Александръ Александровичъ Ивановъ и Николай Павловичъ	
28	27	Мужчина Александръ Александровичъ сынъ Александръ Александровичъ Павловичъ, православнаго сана благочиннаго, перваго браковъ.	38	Женщина Елена Елизаветовна дочь Елены Елизаветовны, православнаго сана перваго браковъ.	21	Священникъ Александръ Александровичъ	Александръ Александровичъ Ивановъ и Варвара Степановна	
28		Мужчина Александръ Александровичъ сынъ Александръ Александровичъ Павловичъ, православнаго сана благочиннаго, перваго браковъ.	26	Женщина Зинаида Зинаидовна дочь Зинаиды Зинаидовны, православнаго сана перваго браковъ.	19	Священникъ Александръ Александровичъ	Александръ Александровичъ Ивановъ и Николай Павловичъ	
28	4	Мужчина Александръ Александровичъ сынъ Александръ Александровичъ Павловичъ, православнаго сана благочиннаго, перваго браковъ.	38	Женщина Евдокія Евдокіевна дочь Евдокія Евдокіевича, православнаго сана перваго браковъ.	26	Священникъ Александръ Александровичъ	Александръ Александровичъ Ивановъ и Варвара Степановна	
25	23	Мужчина Александръ Александровичъ сынъ Александръ Александровичъ Павловичъ, православнаго сана благочиннаго, перваго браковъ.	24	Женщина Евдокія Евдокіевна дочь Евдокія Евдокіевича, православнаго сана перваго браковъ.	16	Священникъ Александръ Александровичъ	Александръ Александровичъ Ивановъ и Николай Павловичъ	

Attachment 9B, Rafail Shabalin & Evdokiya Dediukhina's Wedding Records in English 1887

MARRIAGE RECORD

~ BASED ON RUSSIAN-ENGLISH TRANSLATED EXTRACT FROM THE METRIC BOOK OF DATA FROM THE ALASKA SPIRITUAL BOARD, PARISH OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX UNALASKA ASCENSION CHURCH FOR THE RECORD OF BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS FOR 1887. PART ONE, ABOUT THOSE BORN, PAGE 27, MARRIAGE COUNT RECORD NO. 24, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS* ~
(with Russian originals)

Date of Marriage	October 4th, 1887	ДАТА БРАКОСОЧЕТАНИЯ: 4 ОКТЯБРЯ 1887 Г.
Groom's Name	RAFAIL MIKHAILOVICH SHABALIN	ЖЕНИХ: РАФАИЛ МИХАЙЛОВИЧ ШАБАЛИН
Age	50	ВОЗРАСТ: 50
Place of Residence	Village Unalaska, Aleutian Islands	УНАЛАШКИНСКОЕ СЕЛЕНИЕ, АЛЕУТСКИЕ О-ВА
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНЫЙ
Number of Marriage	2	КОТРОМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 2
Bride's Name	EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA DEDIUKHINA	НЕВЕСТА: ЕВДОКИЯ НИКАНДРОВНА ДЕДУХИНА
Bride's Maiden Name	EVDOKIYA NIKANDROVNA REPINA	НЕВЕСТА (УРОД.): ЕВДОКИЯ НИКАНДРОВНА РЕПИНА
Age	26	ВОЗРАСТ: 26
Place of Residence	Village Unalaska, Aleutian Islands	УНАЛАШКИНСКОЕ СЕЛЕНИЕ, АЛЕУТСКИЕ О-ВА
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛКА
Denomination	Orthodox	ВЕРОИСПОВЕДАНИЕ: ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ
Number of Marriage	2	КОТРОМ БРАКОМ ПО СЧЁТУ: 2
Officiant-1	NIKOLAI STEPANOVICH RYSEV	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО (1):
Title	Priest	НИКОЛАЙ СТЕПАНОВИЧ РЫСЕВ, СВЯЩЕННИК
Officiant-2	ANDREI KARPOVICH LODOCHNIKOV	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО (2):
Title	Clerk (Acolyte)	АНДРЕЙ КАРПОВИЧ ЛОДОЧНИКОВ, ПРИЧЕТНИК
Officiant-3	INNOKENTII VASILIEVICH SHISHKIN	КТО СОВЕРШИЛ ТАИНСТВО (3):
Title	Clerk (Acolyte)	ИННОКЕНТИЙ ВАСИЛЬЕВИЧ ШИШКИН, ПРИЧЕТНИК
Guarantor-1	PAVEL REPIN	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ-1: ПАВЕЛ РЕПИН
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Guarantor-2	IVAN DIAKONOV	ПОРУЧИТЕЛЬ-2: ИВАН ДЬЯКОНОВ
Title	Creole	ЗВАНИЕ: КРЕОЛ
Record Was Made and Signed by:		
Priest	NIKOLAI STEPANOVICH RYSEV	СВЯЩЕННИК: НИКОЛАЙ СТЕПАНОВИЧ РЫСЕВ
Clerk (Acolyte)	ANDREI KARPOVICH LODOCHNIKOV	ПРИЧЕТНИК: АНДРЕЙ КАРПОВИЧ ЛОДОЧНИКОВ
Clerk (Acolyte)	INNOKENTII VASILIEVICH SHISHKIN	ПРИЧЕТНИК: ИННОКЕНТИЙ ВАСИЛЬЕВИЧ ШИШКИН

* 1. The Metric book of data from the New Arkhangelsk Spiritual Board, Parish of the Russian Orthodox Unalaska Ascension Church, for the record of births, marriages and deaths for 1861. Pages 9 and 19. Records of birth of **Evdokiya Nikandrovna Repina** on **August 5, 1861** in the **Village Iliuliuk**. *Records in Russian language.*

2. Metrics about births, performed by the sacred church ministers of the Irkutsk Diocese of North-West America, Unalaska Island, Russian Orthodox Ascension Church, for 1838. Record of birth of **Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin** on **November 6, 1838** in the **Village Iliuliuk**. *Record in Russian language.*

3. Inventory: The Alaskan Russian Church Archives. Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America--Diocese of Alaska. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Reproduced by Alaska Division of State Libraries and Museums. Pouch G, Juneau, Alaska 99811. Pages 27, 30, 31 (*Names of Lodochnikov, Rysev, Shishkin*). https://library.alaska.gov/hist/hist_docs/docs/asi_%20BX497_A4A47_1984.pdf.



Russian American Document Processing Center
State of Alaska, USA
from 1990

Certificate of Russian to English Translation

I, the undersigned, Ekaterina Ovsiannikova, hereby certify that I am fluent in both the English and Russian languages, and that the above attached document is true, full and accurate Russian to English translation of the document entitled Extract from the Parish Register of Marriages by Russian Orthodox Ascension Church, Unalaska (Alaska), year 1887, page 27, record No. 24, issued in regard of the marriage on October 4th, 1887 of Rafail Mikhailovich Shabalin and Evdokiya Nikandrovna Dediukhina.

Company: RUSA, INC.
Address: 9048 Little Brook Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99507
Name of interpreter: Ekaterina Ovsiannikova
Telephone: (907) 563-9999
Fax: (907) 522-9433
E-mail: rusa@gci.net
Website: www.rusa.us
Completion date: February 9th, 2022



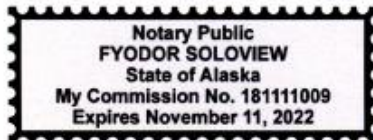
Signature:

[Handwritten signature]

City of Anchorage, State of Alaska, United States

ON THIS THE 9TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2022, BEFORE ME, FYODOR SOLOVIEV, THE UNDERSIGNED NOTARY PUBLIC, PERSONALLY APPEARED EKATERINA OVSIANNIKOVA, PERSONALLY KNOWN TO ME, TO BE THE PERSON WHOSE NAME IS SUBSCRIBED TO THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT, AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THAT SHE EXECUTED THE SAME FOR THE PURPOSES THEREIN STATED.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL.



[Handwritten signature]



APPENDIX B – DATA COLLECTED ON WEST STAIRS JESSE LEE HOME SEWARD

Around October 31, 2019, Michael Livingston contacted the City of Seward to see if it might be possible to record measurements from the west stairs of the Jesse Lee Home to help future researchers attempt to calculate Benny Benson's height in 1927. The request was forwarded to Jackie Wild, city planner for the City of Seward. Livingston developed a six-page form with the photograph of Benny Benson and his teacher standing on the stairs with questions for Jackie Wilde.

Below is the six-page form with Jackie Wilde's responses on pages one and six, as well as photographs which Wilde captured.

Attempting to Calculate Benny Benson's Height from Stairs at Jesse Lee Home in Seward, Alaska



Are any door hinges still visible?
*yes pic 1514
 1515
 1516*

Are there any features (cracks, bumps) on the wall in 2019 that are consistent with this photograph from 1927?
See img. 1520 1516

Does this ding in the concrete show up?
yes

Tread #6? *NO*
~~#7~~

Do these lines or dings in the concrete show up in Riser #6?
see notes

Photograph of Teacher and Benny Benson taken in 1927.

Do these stairs look like the same stairs on the south side of the Jesse Lee Home in Seward?

Notice how the right side of the stairs angle towards the building.

Please take lots of photographs of the stairs. If you see the dings or lines in the concrete, please photograph.

Please place a piece of paper (for example, 3" by 5" card) in the photograph to identify what is in the picture.

I'm 5'2" pic 1519 shows Ref.

Attempting to Calculate Benny Benson's Height from Stairs at Jesse Lee Home in Seward, Alaska

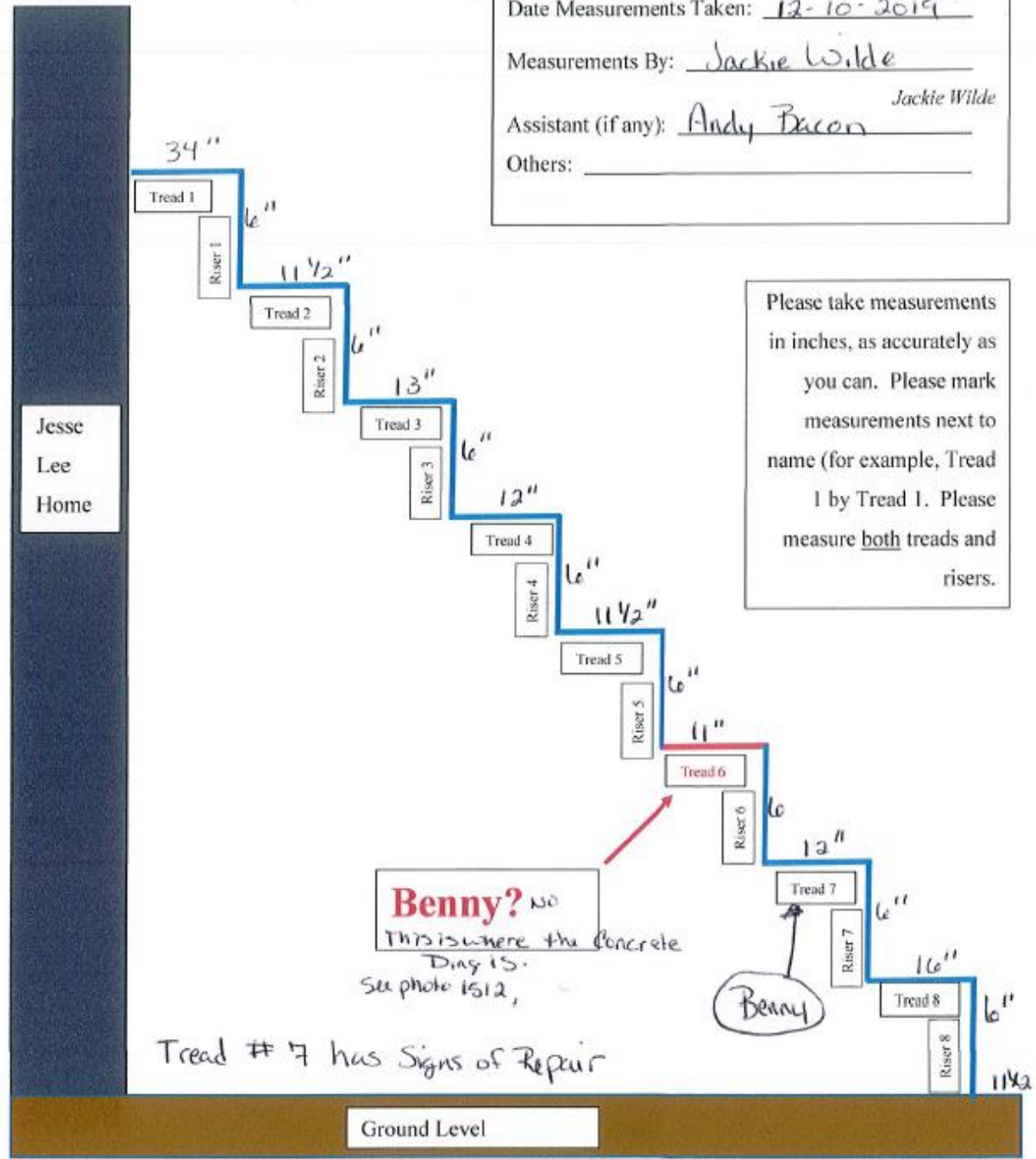


Photograph of possible stairs taken around October 2019.

Attempting to Calculate Benny Benson's Height from Stairs at Jesse Lee Home in Seward, Alaska

Date Measurements Taken: 12-10-2019
Measurements By: Jackie Wilde
Assistant (if any): Andy Bacon
Others: _____

Please take measurements in inches, as accurately as you can. Please mark measurements next to name (for example, Tread 1 by Tread 1. Please measure both treads and risers.



Benny? NO
This is where the concrete
Dug 15.
See photo 1512,

Benny

Tread # 7 has Signs of Repair

Ground Level



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1507



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1508



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1509



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1510



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1511



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1512



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1517



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1519



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1522



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1523



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1524



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1525



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1526



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1527



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1528



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1532



West Stairs of Jesse Lee Home Seward Photograph #1533